ributions by HORATIO BOTTOMLEY, "TAFFRAIL," W. DOUGLAS NEWTON, e

8 1917

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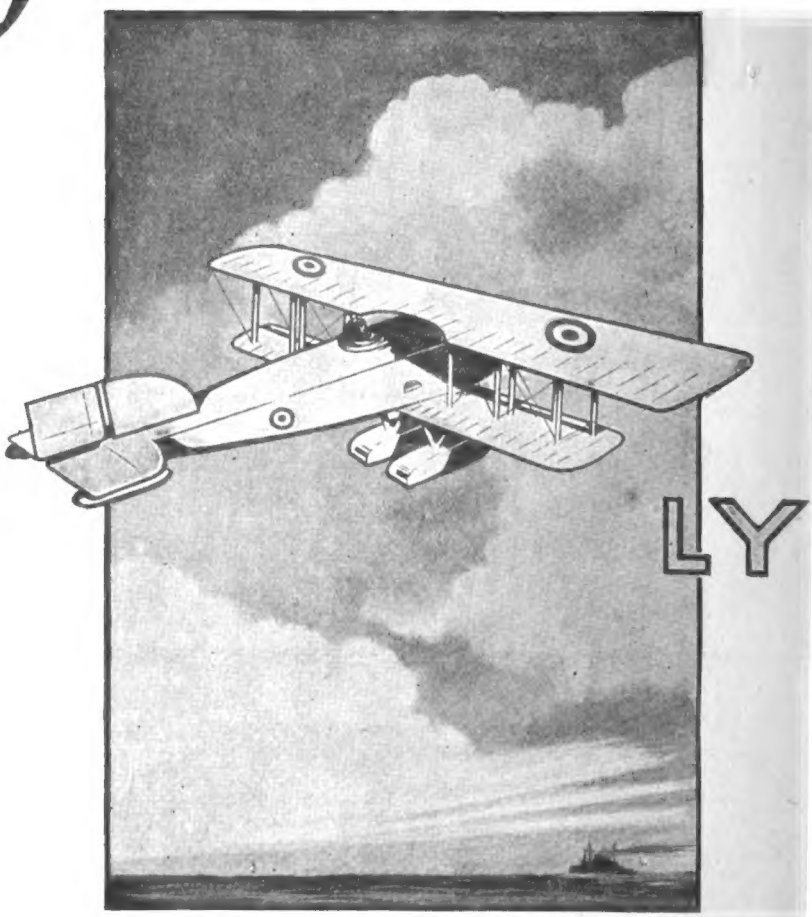

the benefits of

BEECHAM'S PILLS.

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Photo Elvin Norma

A good many people in their hearts envy the flapper her happy, care-free existence. Probably you'll do the same when you turn to page 171 and read "The Fun of Being a Flapper," in which Miss Kathlene Martyn, the pretty young actress, who is only sixteen, points out a few of the pleasurable ways in which flappers score over their elders.

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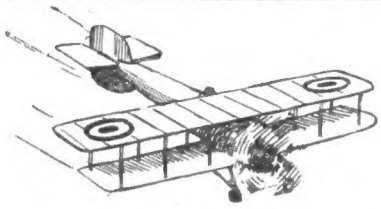
Photo *Elwin Neame.*



One of Miss Martyn's most treasured possessions is the flying cap she is wearing in this picture; it enjoys the distinction of having been worn by one of our airmen when flying over the German lines, and having been fired at by the Hun guns.

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The Fun of Being a Flapper

Riding on the carrier of a motor-cycle is one of the many delights a flapper may indulge in without reproach, since she is still young enough to throw dignity to the winds.

By Kathlene Martyn.

The flappers of to-day are much-to-be-envied young people, and at least one of them—Miss Kathlene Martyn, who plays so charmingly in *Cheep!* at the Vaudeville—realises the fact. In the following article—illustrated from photographs specially taken for THE ROYAL MAGAZINE by Elwin Neame—Miss Martyn describes some of the joys permitted to the flapper, but which are frowned at in connection with her grown-up sister.—[Ed. R.M.]

It's such fun being a flapper that I almost dread the idea of "growing up!"

It seems horrid to look forward to the days when hairpins will be deadly necessities, when sitting on the table or the floor will be absolutely taboo, and when jolly "rags" and good fun will have to be pushed on one side for dull, ordinary, so-called correct and becoming behaviour.

Nobody minds what a flapper does as long as it's something jolly! We seem to cheer the dull old world up somehow, and as I don't believe we do half as much damage as some people try to assert, I can't help feeling that we are really rather useful members of society. Anyhow, we are gay and irresponsible, and although our elders, and betters, may exclaim: "My *dear* child!" in horrified accents when they meet us descending the stairs seated on a tea-tray, I am sure they go away and laugh about it afterwards—if they are too strait-laced to laugh while we can see them!

And everybody knows that laughter is the finest tonic in the world. So there you are! Who dares to say we aren't useful after that? And what's a tea-tray, more or less? Stairs were made for sliding down; at least, that's my opinion.

In a way, I think flappers have been the saving of the nation in war-time. I'll tell you why. Nobody ever expects a flapper to be serious. That's not our line at all. Seriousness cramps our style, if you know what I mean. We romp, and laugh, and play, and enjoy life tremendously, but we *can't* be serious about it.

That's really and truly the difference between us and the "Hair-up Brigade," who are only a little older in reality. We

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take our pleasures joyfully, they take theirs seriously, even sadly. Pleasure is a pleasure to us. To them it is a business.

To go back to the war. I think we've done a lot, because while our brothers and other people's brothers are home on leave, or wounded, or any old thing like that, when they go out with the "Hair-up Brigade" they have to look soulful, and intense, and talk about shells, and trenches, and brass hats, and rations; otherwise, the "Hair-ups" think they've been cheated out of an intellectual equality with Man, for which they have been striving for years. (Silly duffers!)

But when Reggie takes us out to tea—a great event, but not quite so full of bliss these days; still, that's a *very* tiny thing—there's no soul-yearning gazing, no intense, thrilling, gasping revelations. Only just lots to laugh about and yarn about, like two good pals. There's no nonsense about us, unless you call a love of mischief by that name.

(*Scooter by Gamages.*)

A scooter is splendid sport, but few girls who have reached the hair-up stage would care to "scoot" in public, whereas Miss Martyn and other privileged flappers may indulge to their hearts' content.

Not long ago a man who was at school with my brother came over on leave, and though he had never met me, my brother wrote and told him to dig me up. He did, and we spent a lot of jolly days while his leave lasted. Somehow, I wanted to make it a good leave, really full of gaiety and fun. We did lots of lovely, out-of-the-ordinary things, and I don't believe we talked about the war *once!* Not that flappers can't if they want to. They can, and they've got hearts like older people, but it's their job to be merry and bright, and they believe in doing their job.

Well, when that soldier-man went back he wrote me a letter I shall always treasure, because it proves that it's worth while being a flapper in war-days:

"DEAR LITTLE FLAPPER-PAL" (so it ran),

"Now I'm safely across the water I want you to know that those ripping days when you made leave seem good to me will always remain in my heart. I want to confess that once I hated flappers, sneered at them, and abused them as silly, flighty creatures, because I never really knew one. Now that I know you I've proved myself all wrong. Nobody could wish for a jollier companion, a more cheery friend, a truer pal. Thank you, little laughing flapper, for being—just you."

While I remember, I want to tell you what happened last time I had a holiday. I was staying in the country, in a ramshackle old house, and we were a party of mixed ages, boys and girls, "Hair-up Brigade," and real grown-ups, all complete. One of the "Hair-ups" was a very pretty girl, about twenty-two, I think. But oh, she was so conscious of her dignity and the "correct" thing. She sat about in chairs in pretty attitudes, and always had a sunshade, and couldn't climb stiles because it was *so* undignified.

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Of course, I had the time of my life! I climbed fences and ran races, and several tea-trays led a harassed existence, I'm sorry to say. How we bumped! And how we laughed!—and who cared, anyway? It came to the evening before some of the boys were going off to camp, and after dinner, for a "rag," I got into my brother's pyjamas, and we ended up with a wild pillow-fight. My room was next to the dignified "Hair-up" girl's, and before I went to bed, standing by my open window, I heard someone crying—really sobbing—next door. Bolting out, I plunged in unceremoniously, and there she was, huddled up, still graceful, and sobbing as if her heart was broken.

Miss Martyn confesses to a great weakness for sliding downstairs on a tea-tray——

——and being "only a flapper" she may follow it up by a pillow-fight, and still the world will smile at her.

"What's the matter?" I asked her.

She turned on me savagely. "It's *you!*" she exclaimed. "You horrid little flapper! You're so jolly and merry, and it doesn't matter what you do—people laugh at you, and you cheer them up—and you can climb trees and dress up in pyjamas, and I can't! And I think I hate you!"

It was a regular outburst, and I was quite scared at first. Then I began to laugh. "Don't be so absurd," I said. "Why, you're only a flapper, too—in your heart! It's so silly to talk like that, and please don't hate me. Why don't you do all the jolly things, too?"

She stared at me. "My *dear* child, I'm

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The modern flapper may be a bit of a tomboy, she may scale walls and——

——climb trees, but, as Miss Martyn says, "nobody minds what a flapper does as long as it's something jolly."

grown up. How could I? My—my dignity would—oh, I couldn't!"

"You could—and you shall!" I told her. "Let down your hair to-morrow, and put on your shortest skirt, and then see what you feel like."

And she did! The result was, she had a gorgeous time—she was awfully pretty—and when the holidays were over I think she quite hated going back to the ranks of the "Hair-up Brigade" again. I know I shall when my turn comes.

Have you ever tried a scooter? It's the loveliest thing, awfully exciting and hair-raising, and full of unexpected developments. You simply whizz along, and talking of whizzing along, I did it pretty successfully one day not long ago.

I was "scooting" busily in a quiet road, and turned a corner rather sharply. Before I could pull up I had bumped heavily into a man who was coming slowly towards me. With a shock I saw his blue uniform and red tie, and heard his stick clatter on the pavement, as the sudden bump I gave him knocked it out of his hand. Feeling guilty of hurting a wounded man is simply beastly, I can tell

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you, and I blushed to the roots of my hair with sheer mortification, as I dropped my scooter and picked up his stick.

"I'm so very sorry," I told him. "I'd no business to come round the corner like that. Do forgive me. I hope I haven't hurt you very much?"

To my surprise he positively beamed at me. "Why, miss," he said, "I'd be hurt ten times as much just to have had the pleasure of talking to you! It's a rum world—and small, too."

I begged him to explain.

"Well, you see, miss, I *know* you—at least, I know who you are, but I never thought I'd meet you like this and talk to you, like one friend to another. Your name's Martyn, isn't it—Miss Kathlene Martyn?"

I admitted the fact, and then he told me all about it. It appeared that when he was in France he and his two best pals had got hold of one of my pictures in a real flying cap, and though they'd only seen me once on the stage, they kept it between them as a sort of mascot. And they made a bet among themselves that whoever got back to "Blighty" first should come to see me at the theatre, and tell me about it, and get me to give them a proper picture each instead of the one out of the paper.

They got those pictures, of course,

Chairs and sofas are not the only seats permissible to the flapper; she may perch on a table or curl up on the floor, in many unconventional attitudes denied to her elders.

and when people tell me there's no such thing as a coincidence I just think of that little story, which happens to be true.

By the way, there's rather an interesting little history behind that flying-cap. It is a real, genuine flying man's cap, and the man who gave it to me wore it when flying over the Hun trenches before it came to me, and was fired at by the Hun guns.

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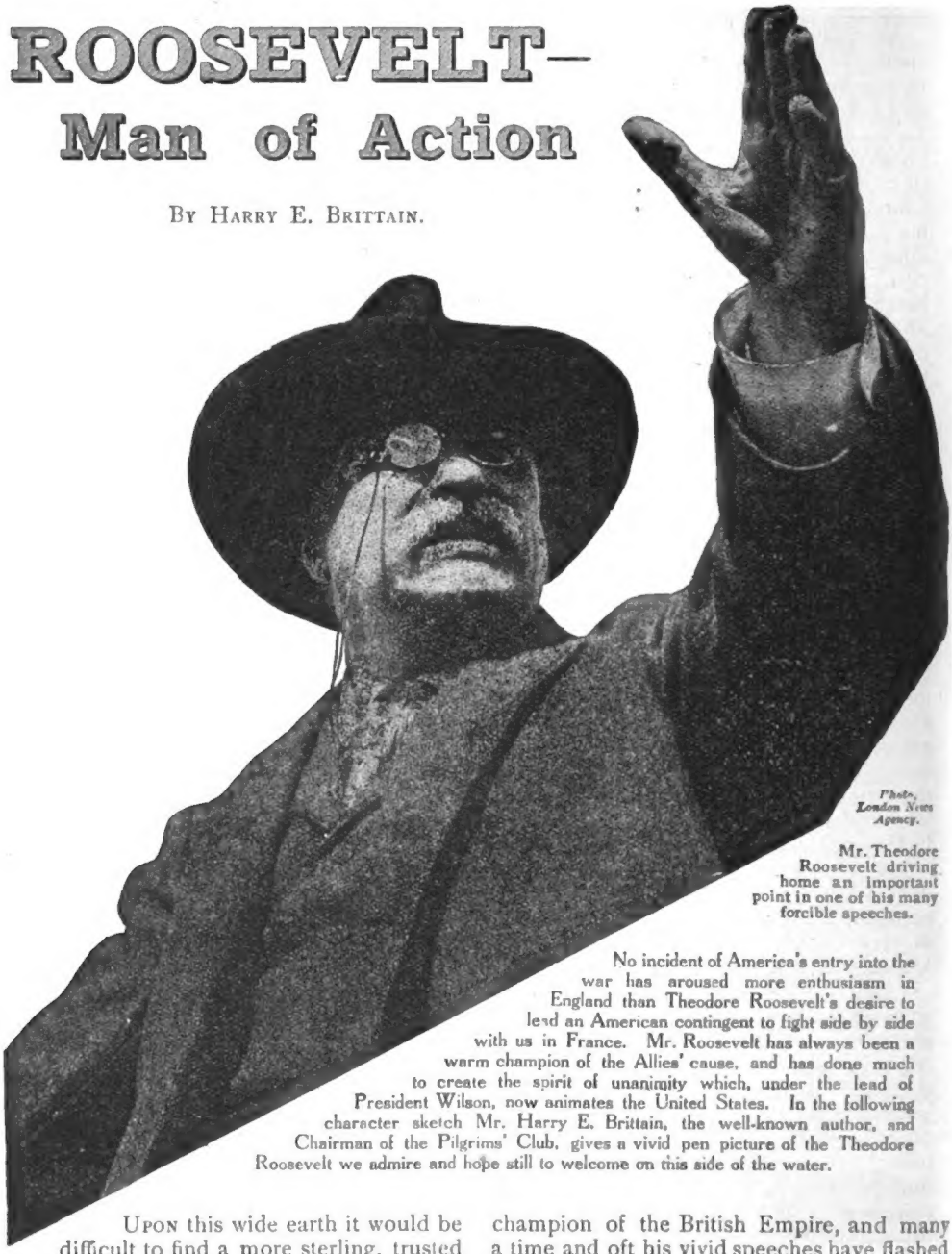
ROOSEVELT—
Man of Action

By Harry E. Brittain.



Photo, London News Agency.

Mr. Theodore Roosevelt driving home an important point in one of his many forcible speeches.

No incident of America's entry into the war has aroused more enthusiasm in England than Theodore Roosevelt's desire to lead an American contingent to fight side by side with us in France. Mr. Roosevelt has always been a warm champion of the Allies' cause, and has done much to create the spirit of unanimity which, under the lead of President Wilson, now animates the United States. In the following character sketch Mr. Harry E. Brittain, the well-known author, and Chairman of the Pilgrims' Club, gives a vivid pen picture of the Theodore Roosevelt we admire and hope still to welcome on this side of the water.

Upon this wide earth it would be difficult to find a more sterling, trusted friend, or a more fearless, hard-hitting foe than Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. His powerful personality attracts his admirers by the hundred thousand, and with the strength of a magnet, whilst those who dislike him pay him the compliment of doing so as strenuously as in them lies.

Roosevelt has been, and quite rightly, a great and popular figure with Englishmen for years. He has shown himself a doughty champion of the British Empire, and many a time and oft his vivid speeches have flashed home facts, the reading of which has caused our British blood to flow a little faster.

Few men have had such a varied career as the ex-President. The dash and vigour of his ranching days in Dakota, of his life among the Rockies, his big game hunting in Central Africa, have never left him; historian, Colonel of Rough Riders in Cuba, Police Commissioner, Civil Service Reformer, President of the United States—these are only

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some of the *rôles* he has filled, and filled with distinction, in his adventurous life.

As is only natural with such an intrepid spirit, Roosevelt has looked death in the face on repeated occasions and suffered innumerable injuries as the reward of his fearlessness. In his ranching days out West a bucking broncho was responsible for three broken ribs, though it was not until forty-eight hours later that Roosevelt, having finished his part in the round-up, confessed to the injury.

In 1891 Mr. Roosevelt, on a visit to his North Dakota Ranch, tried to ford the Little Missouri on horseback and narrowly escaped drowning; while an encounter with a grizzly bear when hunting in Idaho nearly put an end to his career on another occasion. Chased by an infuriated steer in Wyoming, Roosevelt's courage and coolness did not desert him, for he met the situation by grabbing the steer by the horns, vaulting it, and riding the surprised and infuriated animal for two miles.

The man who tries to take a rise out of Theodore Roosevelt is liable to a swift awakening, as the following story of his days out West will show. It was in a drinking saloon, where a drunken rowdy, taking him for a tenderfoot, ordered him at the point of his two revolvers to stand treat. Roosevelt got up, apparently to comply; the next moment the bully measured his length on the ground, completely floored by a famous left-hander that had won ungrudging respect in Harvard days.

My first meeting with the great ex-President was in the City of New York, the occasion being the inauguration of Nicholas Murray Butler as President of Columbia University.

I had the honour to be present at this gathering, being dragged in as a humble graduate of Oxford. Naturally, my old Alma Mater was very much in the minds of everyone at a University function, and many were the questions asked; but the intensity of these questions was as nothing compared to that which I experienced when led up and duly presented to Theodore Roosevelt. His conversation resembled the rattle of a quick-firing gun, but, fast and pounding as it was, he never shifted from one point to the next until he appeared to have grasped every detail required.

That is Roosevelt right through.

When he was over here in 1909 he was tremendously interested in the probable results of the First Imperial Press Conference, which had just taken place. He wanted to know if an official report had been written of this Imperial gathering, and asked me to send on board the ship on which he was to cross a copy of the book, which came out under the name of "The Parliament of the Press."

On the voyage home, I subsequently learnt from fellow-passengers that he did a thousand things, but that did not seem to prevent him from reading this closely-written book most carefully, and sending me a long and interesting letter commenting with wonderful shrewdness on what the book contained.

It is a wonderful sight to see Colonel Roosevelt shake by the hand a long line of appreciative visitors. He makes each one feel as if he were the one dear friend whose arrival made an entire difference to the whole proceedings.

One day after a somewhat memorable Guildhall speech he was present at a crowded reception at Lord Strathcona's house in Grosvenor Square. Entering with the Colonel, who took in the situation at a glance, I was invited to stand by his side and keep the crowd on the move during the process of the hand-shaking. It was an enjoyable hour. To everyone he had something to say—something well worth while—and between the hand-shakes he kept up a running conversation, regaling me with anecdotes of mutual American friends.

One enthusiastic stranger enlivened the proceedings when shaking me warmly by both hands, by exclaiming: "It's bully to see the Colonel again, and I suppose you are Mr. Kermit!"

Theodore Roosevelt is always the life and soul of any gathering at which he happens to be present, and I doubt whether he ever feels happier than when he is surrounded by his brethren of the pen, unless perhaps it is on those occasions when his comrades of the sword—and the gun—are with him. With these weapons of offence, and any other weapon which is fair and square, T. R. is a master.

In his delightfully secluded home at Oyster Bay, the ex-President is never tired of entertaining his friends. Visitors of every sort and kind, of every type and interest, are ever drifting in; magnetised into action by this remarkable man, and impelled by the force and fervour of his wonderful personality, they in their turn go forth to preach the lessons with which he has inspired them.

In whatever capacity the Colonel comes to Great Britain, we may express the hope that London Town will have a chance, in the not far distant future, of letting him know how London greets her friends.

For Colonel Theodore Roosevelt there is a welcome waiting which will re-echo from the Rockies to the Rhine.

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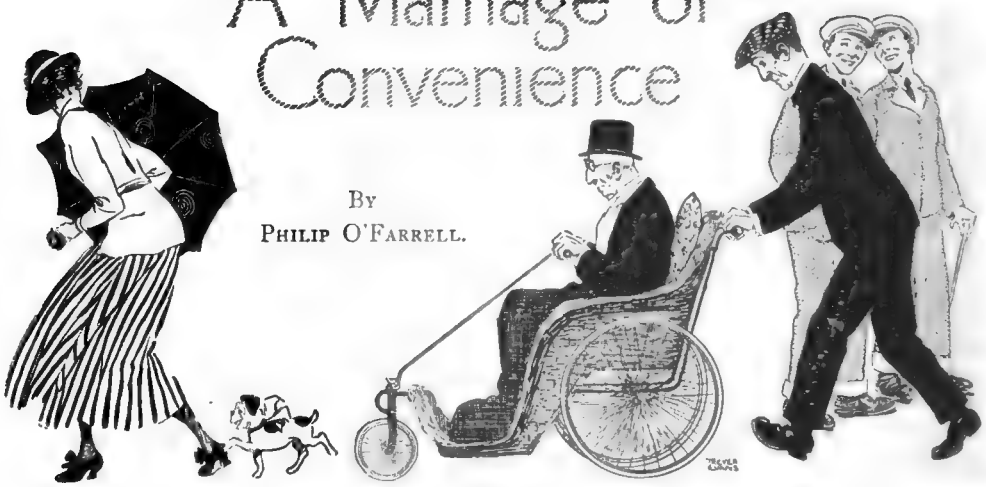
A Marriage of Convenience

By
Philip O'Farrell.



A critic has found fault with love stories because their heroes and heroines are always under 80. This story may have every other fault under the sun, but at least it is not open to that objection.

I.

"The place is overrun—overrun!" Mr. Thomas Tilbury snorted indignantly, and searched the crowded promenade through his horn-rimmed spectacles. "The New Jerusalem, that's what it is! Scared of Margate and they all come to the South Coast, hang 'em. Wish the Zeps would follow 'em. Push the thing on, Jenkins, push along. What's the use of stopping here?"

The patient Jenkins, thus adjured, methodically removed his check cap, wiped his brow with a bandana handkerchief, and then resumed his tedious task of steering Mr. Tilbury's bath-chair through the throng—most of whom were far too busy in eyeing each other to bother about steering themselves. And every time someone collided with the front wheel Mr. Tilbury grew more choleric, and the subsequent interchange of compliments grew more acrimonious.

"If we was to get a bit farther away from the band . . ." ventured Jenkins.

But Mr. Tilbury was too excited to pay attention to the suggestion. "See that young woman with the purple hat, Jenkins," he cried. "That's the seventh time she's turned round and ogled a wounded soldier. I've counted. And it's my firm belief that she hasn't been introduced to one of them. I don't know what the younger generation's coming to—'pon my word I don't."

"No, sir," said Jenkins wearily, and bumped the bath-chair over a parasol which lay straggling across the path. He turned to apologise to the owner.

"It was quite my fault," she said graciously; and then added: "If you are looking for a seat, my maid is just going into the town . . ."

Jenkins touched his cap with an air of relief. "How would this do, sir?" he asked.

Mr. Tilbury was on the point of barking that it wouldn't do at all, when his eyes happened to observe the owner of the parasol. She was quite a picture of an old lady. Her white hair was parted in window curtains, and her neat black bonnet with its one red rose was tied beneath her chin with velvet strings. She wore a black silk dress, and her black cape trimmed with jet was thrown open sufficiently to reveal a large topaz mounted in an old-fashioned setting. It was the brooch which decided Mr. Tilbury. It was, as he phrased it to himself, "a true gentlewoman's jewel," and its owner seemed to him an oasis in this conglomeration of screeching flappers and flamboyant matrons.

"If you are quite sure that I shall not be

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incommoding you, madam—" he said, and raised his square felt hat with a flourish.

The old lady repeated her assurance, and Mr. Tilbury descending from his chair on a stout stick and the arm of Jenkins, was presently installed in the chair vacated by the lady's maid.

The old lady resumed the knitting on which she was engaged, and Mr. Tilbury was soon deep in the leader column of the *Morning Post*, snorting, as it were, in unison with the writer of those truly trenchant phrases. No further conversation passed until Jenkins returned at a quarter-to-one with the bath-chair.

"I don't know if you are making a long stay here," then said the old lady, "but my maid comes out early every morning to secure me this seat, and she could easily keep one for you, too, if it would save you any bother."

"It is most good of you, madam," replied Mr. Tilbury gratefully. "Really, I scarcely like to take advantage of your courtesy."

The old lady smiled and bowed. "I know the difficulty of finding a place," she said. "Should we say about a quarter-to-eleven to-morrow—weather permitting?"

Mr. Tilbury agreed with alacrity.

"A most distinguished-looking woman," he said to Jenkins as they moved away. "Quite one of the old school."

"Maid seems a sensible kind of body, too, sir," answered Jenkins.

He did not add that she had displayed her sense by commandeering him, by some method which he had not yet fully fathomed, to carry her parcels in the town that morning.

II.

It is perfectly possible that the intercourse between Mr. Tilbury and the old lady might have been for ever limited to an exchange of "Good mornings" and "Good days." The girl with the purple hat was really responsible for all that happened. On the third day, Mr. Tilbury's glance, straying from the burning words of his favourite news-sheet, chanced to alight upon her in one of her more flagrant moments. She compelled him to an exclamation which he felt it only polite to explain to the lady at his side.

"Yes, perhaps present-day girls are a little flighty," she agreed. "But, on the other hand, I'm sure they mean no wrong. Naturally every wounded soldier is a hero. I have frequently spoken to them myself," she added, with an air of confession.

Mr. Tilbury thought it very charming of her to take this point of view, but shook his head gravely. In his reply he ventured to hint that he, as a man of the world, scented dangers of which she naturally would be ignorant. The old lady, not wishing to foster a disagreement thus early in their acquaintance, changed the subject.

"I see you take the *Post*," she said. "A most respectable newspaper, I always think—really the only one left in which we can have any confidence."

"I'm glad to hear you say so, madam—very glad," assented Mr. Tilbury heartily. "Have you read their second leader this morning? They give that fellow, Balcombe, a good trouncing—ought to make him sit up, by gad! Listen to this!"

He was started. He gave her a digest of the contents of the first and second leaders, the political notes, the foreign correspondence, and the views of the naval and military experts. She appeared to find it all very impressive. Mr. Tilbury himself, it appeared, was in the habit of sending frequent and lengthy letters to the editor of the paper, and had reason to believe that the advice contained in these was much valued, though lack of space unfortunately prevented their appearance in print. Still, he felt that he was doing his bit, and only wished he could do more.

"Have you ever learnt to knit?" asked the old lady—rather inconsequentially it seemed to Mr. Tilbury.

"Good gracious, madam, certainly not!" he exclaimed abruptly, and restrained himself just in time from adding that he was not an old woman.

The old lady gently tried to persuade him of the error of his ways. "There's such a need of mufflers and socks and sweaters," she said. "That dear Mr. Penoyre, who writes those fascinating letters to the newspapers, is always asking for more. I'm sure you could help a lot if you tried."

During the remaining weeks of the summer season visitors to Southbeach were entertained each morning by the engaging spectacle of Mr. Tilbury gradually, and with admirable, but unusual perseverance, making himself the master of a ball of khaki wool and knitting needles.

III.

Once more the scene was Southbeach front—but the time was night.

The band had just finished its evening ragtimes, and the crowd was thinning out. Two revellers wended their way across the darkened road. The man wore a neat blue suit and a cap. His companion rustled in black silk, and carried an umbrella in the most approved royal fashion. They walked stiffly, almost ceremoniously, and the tips of the lady's left hand fingers rested on the edge of the gentleman's right arm.

"Well, good-night, Mr. Jenkins," she

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They discerned the stalwart figure of Mr. Jenkins—one hand behind his back, toying with the propeller of the bath-chair—leaning over the promenade railing in earnest conversation with the soberly-garbed Miss Hobbs—

said, as they came to the corner of a street. "I won't trouble you to come no further—and thank you for the evening."

"The pleasure was mine, Miss Hobbs," Mr. Jenkins answered her, and looked up thoughtfully at the moon. "Hope there won't be rain to-morrow," he added. "The guv'nor gets that ratty when we can't get out. And"—pathetically—"I dunno 'ow to unwind 'im from 'is knitting."

Miss Hobbs allowed herself a ladylike smile. "A very sensible hobby for a gentleman, I think," she said. "Much better than those dirty pipes."

Mr. Jenkins sighed. "P'raps you're right," he agreed. And then: "When did you say you was leaving?"

"To-morrow week."

"Ah!" said Mr. Jenkins profoundly.

"I think"—Miss Hobbs bridled with a touch of maidenly modesty—"I think we'd best leave the little matter we was discussing till nearer the time."

"As you please," assented Mr. Jenkins. "I allus trusts these things to a woman." He raised his cap. "See you quarter-to-eleven, all being well?"

Miss Hobbs giggled. "To tell you the truth," she said, "I don't know how we ever gets out at all these mornings. She's that fussy all of a sudden about her bonnets and fal-lals—lord love a duck, you'd think she was in her first season!"

IV.

"It's sad to see the leaves begin to fall," said the old lady.

"It's sad to think we've only one more day of Southbeach," sighed Mr. Tilbury.

"There's always next year," suggested his companion.

Mr. Tilbury tapped the ground with his stick. "I've been to Southbeach for August and September these twenty years," he said, "and I've never enjoyed my holiday more."

"You're looking better for it," said the old lady. "And you've done splendid work, too. That last muffler was as good as I could have knitted myself. You must tie a label with your name and address to it, so that the soldier who gets it can write to you."

"I shall miss our pleasant talks," observed Mr. Tilbury sadly. "I wonder if you would let me hear from you now and then?"

The old lady intimated that she would be delighted. She took a card from her bag and presented it to Mr. Tilbury in exchange for one of his. He remarked that he believed Sevenoaks was a very desirable locality, and she wondered how ever he could stand that horrid London smoke.

Conversation languished after that, and they sat a little mournfully gazing out to sea until the faithful Jenkins and the austere Hobbs came to seek their respective charges.

"Only one more day!" repeated Mr. Tilbury, as he shuffled into his chair.

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"— Do you think——?" began the old lady. "Is it possible——?" began Mr. Tilbury.

"But I hope we shall meet again next year," repeated the old lady.

"Ah!" Mr. Tilbury shook his head dolefully. "Who knows? I'm not so young as I was—and then, this war! But whatever happens"—he raised his hat with the old, impressive courtesy—"whatever happens, madam, I hope we shall meet in Heaven."

V.

They met again next morning, however, and both were far from being in the blissful and contented state usually associated with celestial realms.

"I'm terribly upset—terribly upset!" muttered Mr. Tilbury, as the faithful Jenkins withdrew his chair. "My man has given me notice!"

"What a remarkable coincidence!" exclaimed the old lady. "I, too, have had a most disturbing morning. My maid, who has been with me for fifteen years, wishes to leave."

They gazed at each other long and searchingly.

"Might I ask, without seeming impertinent," said Mr. Tilbury at last, "why your maid has taken this into her head?"

"She tells me she wishes to get married."

"By gad, that's very extraordinary! Jenkins has the audacity to inform me that he is contemplating matrimony also!"

There was another silence. Mr. Tilbury and the old lady looked at each other, and then they looked along the front—no longer crowded, but wearing a very "end of the season" air. They discerned the stalwart figure of Mr. Jenkins—one hand behind his back toying with the propeller of the bath-chair—leaning over the promenade railing in earnest conversation with the soberly-garbed Miss Hobbs.

"Do you think——?" began the old lady.

"Is it possible——?" began Mr. Tilbury.

"Hobbs has certainly been unusually insistent in asking for nights out since we have been here," remarked the old lady.

"Jenkins has had every Wednesday and Saturday evening off," observed Mr. Tilbury.

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"And three times he has been late in getting back and bringing up my hot milk."

"The same nights as Hobbs!" murmured the old lady significantly.

"Jenkins, in his conversation to me of late, has dwelt almost morbidly on the loneliness of bachelors of—well, advancing years," said Mr. Tilbury.

"For the last month or so Hobbs has taken quite an unwholesome relish in telling me of the dreadful things that happen to—er—elderly women who have no male protector," returned the old lady.

Mr. Tilbury polished up his spectacles and once more contemplated the suspect couple in the distance. There was almost a roguish twinkle in his old eyes when he turned again to his companion. He coughed.

"Jenkins tells me he proposes to look out for a place where a married couple are needed," he said. "I've no room for them in my chambers in town. Not, of course, that I could ever overlook Jenkins' scandalous ingratitude — after being with me all these years."

"It seems a pity," mused the old lady. "Hobbs is such an excellent maid. But really there wouldn't be anything to do in my house for a man."

"Not unless you had one of your own as well," said Mr. Tilbury boldly.

* * * * *

No bride could have taken a more lively interest in her wedding-gown than did the future Mrs. Tilbury in her new grey satin. Mr. and Mrs Jenkins, united, by agreement, earlier in the day, attended the church, the former solicitously propelling the bridegroom up the aisle. The honeymoon, also by arrangement, was a "foursome," and was spent at Southbeach.

Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins, after seeing Mr. and Mrs. Tilbury into their first-class carriage at the station, retired to their own second-class compartment—a non-smoker—in the front of the train.

"I must say, Emma," observed Mr. Jenkins, as he drew a half-knitted sock from his overcoat pocket, "as you managed things remarkably well."

CHAMPAGNE.

Soft as a mid-May twilight,
  Shy as an autumn mist,
The uncaressed caresses
  Of the girls we never kissed;
Sweet as an April morning,
  Dim as the call of doves,
The delicate, mute flirtations—
  The little, fugitive loves!

They shed o'er the dust of London
  The scent of the dew-drenched lanes,
The girls on the tops of 'buses,
  The girls that we passed in trains;
Eyes that the fancy fixed on,
  Lips with a gift of smiles,
Though she came from a flat in Brixton
  And not the Fortunate Isles.

The swing of a girlish figure,
  The line of a perfect throat,
The faint, persisting fragrance
  Of the violets in her coat,
Her skirt as she turned the corner,
  The touch of her dainty gloves—
One of the mute flirtations,
  The little, fugitive loves!

François.

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THE SHAMEEN PIRATES

By "TAFFRAIL."

Even before the advent of the great war the Navy had its exciting moments, and in the following story the popular author of "Carry On!" "Stand By!" "Off Shore," etc., etc., describes a thrilling encounter between the crew of a picket boat and a band of Chinese pirates, who had been committing depredations on inoffensive craft plying along the West River between Hong Kong and Canton.

I.

I KNEW at once that something unusual was in the wind when the Captain came back from his conference with the Admiral. Our ship, the cruiser *Dorset*, was lying at her usual buoy in Hong Kong harbour. I was keeping the forenoon watch, and when the "owner" came back at 11.30 after an absence of over two hours on board the flagship, he seemed rather pleased. One could always tell when he was in a good temper, for his eyes twinkled and he had a habit of smiling and chuckling to himself.

"Harvey," he said to the Commander, when the latter received him at the top of the gangway, "the C.-in-C. has given us a job. Those devils up the West River are on the rampage again, and we've got to——"

I did not hear any more, for they walked off together along the quarter-deck and went down to the Skipper's cabin. But what with the news in the local papers that morning saying that the West River pirates had held up the British steam-launch, *Shameen*, on her way up to Canton, had plundered her and set her on fire, and had then scuppered every living soul on board her, including one Englishman, and the Skipper's remark to the Commander, I knew quite enough to put two and two together and to realise what was the matter.

People at home in England are rather inclined to scoff at pirates. They seem to imagine that they are as extinct as the proverbial Dodo, but this was very far from being the case in China at the time of which I write, which is not so very many years ago.

At any rate, on the West River—that broad waterway which stretches for about ninety miles between Hong Kong and Canton, and which has many small tributaries and is cut up into innumerable creeks—piracy was by no means unknown. Indeed, given the opportunity, most of the Chinese who lived in the villages on the banks seemed to indulge in the habit, and if a river steamer or launch ran ashore or got into difficulties, the chances were quite £100 to a brass farthing that she would be looted and burnt. The crew and passengers, anxious to protect their property, would naturally resist, whereupon, outnumbered by more than a hundred to one, they would be extremely lucky if they got away with their lives.

The British and Chinese authorities between them had done much to suppress this undesirable state of affairs by policing the river with armed launches and gunboats. But it was very difficult to stamp it out altogether, and next to impossible to tell for certain who was a pirate and who was not, for the wily Celestial, having hidden his weapons, became a peaceful farmer or fisherman whenever the gunboats happened to be in his vicinity. He was only a bloodthirsty robber when the chance came his way and nobody was looking. At other times he was a model of all the virtues and the delight of the missionaries.

Occasionally, but very occasionally, a gang might be caught red-handed and turned over to the Chinese authorities in Canton for summary execution. But sometimes, when times were slack and there was nothing much doing, the responsible Mandarin would round up a batch of his perfectly innocent countrymen and, with his tongue in his cheek, cause them to be decapitated after a mockery of a trial and in spite of their own most vehement objections. Human life is cheap in an enlightened country where they have a cheerful habit of drowning girl babies, who will not eventually become wage-earners for their parents, and, while the Mandarin got full credit for doing his job, and was presented with a superior coloured button and an extra peacock's feather to wear in his hat, the supreme authorities in Peking did not really care who suffered. The more the merrier, in fact. Somebody had to be executed, and if any foreign minister took it into his head to

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ask awkward questions as to what steps were being taken to put down piracy, the Peking people could always turn up a most satisfactory list of decapitations to prove how anxious they really were to stamp out the detestable practice.

For a year or more at a time there would be no flagrant cases of craft being held up. Then, quite suddenly, and for no apparent reason, there would come a recrudescence, and the *pilongs*, as the peaceable natives called them, would get busy again. They knew everything and seemed to have their agents and informers everywhere, and generally did the trick by having accomplices with concealed weapons among the passengers when a richly-laden launch left Hong Kong for Canton.

In describing all this I am speaking, of course, of the days before the revolution which resulted in the abolition of the Chinese monarchy, but I believe it is a fact that all the launches and river steamers plying on the West River are still provided with firearms, and that they have a steel grille or framework behind the steering position to prevent the steersman from being rushed by armed desperadoes who may have smuggled themselves on board as harmless passengers.

So when, a quarter-of-an-hour later, the Commander came up from the Captain's cabin and gave orders for our picket boat to raise steam and to be ready for hoisting out by four o'clock that afternoon, I was not the least bit surprised. I knew at once that she was to assist in patrolling the West River.

But, having given his orders, the Commander came across to me.

"Allington," he said (I am Roger Allington, and I was the *Dorset's* junior watch-keeping lieutenant), "Allington, you'd better tell the senior watch-keeper to have you relieved straight away. You'll be wanted to go away in charge of the picket boat at six o'clock this evening."

I could have jumped for joy, for you can hardly imagine how the idea of a little excitement and the possibility of a scrap with pirates bucked one up.

"Thanks awfully, sir," I managed to say.

The Commander grunted. "You may not thank me quite so much at the end of a week," he answered with a grin. "You'll find it's a dog's life. However, somebody had to go, and as you're young and fairly energetic I recommended you. You'll have the usual picket boat's crew and can choose one snotty to go with you."

"And how long shall I be away, sir?"

"Haven't an idea. Possibly only a few days, or perhaps a fortnight. At any rate, we'll arrange to have you relieved at the end of a fortnight if you're sick of it. Now as to arrangements. We shall fit a set of portable wireless in the boat and will lend you a telegraphist. The boat will carry her 3-pounder and a Maxim. The crew will take rifles, and the officers and coxswain pistols, but look out you have plenty of cutlasses—they're useful if you have to run amok at close quarters. You'll have a sort of roving commission up and down the river, but will be based on Canton, and can get coal, water, and anything else you want in the way of stores and provisions from the sloop *Alceste*, which is lying there. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," said I, hugely pleased with myself.

"Right," said the Commander. "Now this afternoon I want you to make all the necessary arrangements. Get what charts you want from the navigator and arrange for the ammunition, stores, provisions, coal, water, and all the rest of it. You see," he added, "if you do it all yourself you can't turn round afterwards and accuse someone else of being a fool if something's been forgotten. Eh, what?"

"No, sir. Quite so," I agreed, laughing.

The Commander—one of the very best officers I have ever served with—scratched his left eyebrow. "You needn't be so cockahoop, young fella-me-lad," he observed with his dry smile. "I like to see a junior officer keen, of course, but I'll bet my bottom dollar you'll be fed up with the business in less than a week. Don't forget your anchor, cable, and lead-line, as they're all important, and, above all, I beseech you not to put my precious picket boat on the rocks. If you do"—and he tried to look very fierce—"I'll have you torn limb from limb and will never say a civil word to you again. Savvy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Right! Now we understand each other. You'll leave the ship this evening, but the Captain will give you your detailed orders in writing. That's all, I think, but come to me if you want anything, and don't go telling everyone you meet what you're going to do."

"I'll be as dumb as the Sphinx, sir," I answered.

II.

The Commander was perfectly right, for within a week I was—well, not exactly "fed up," perhaps, but on the verge of being so. A fifty six-foot picket boat is not a very roomy craft at the best of times, but when she carries a 3-pounder Hotchkiss, a ·303-inch Maxim, and the necessary ammunition for them, a mast for signalling and wireless telegraphy purposes, extra coal in bags on deck, a fine assortment of provisions in wooden cases, drinking water in barricoes, and the necessary

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changes of raiment for her crew, there is not much room to swing a kitten.

Moreover, we were uncomfortably crowded, for there were a dozen of us on board all told—myself; young Harstead, the snotty; Scroggs, the Chief Petty Officer coxswain; four A.B.'s; a stoker Petty Officer to drive the engines; two stokers; a telegraphist; and a Chinese pilot who was supposed to have a fluent knowledge of English. He was not much use as a pilot, for he had never seen a chart, and ran us ashore three times during the first week, but on soft mud, luckily, from which we managed to get off undamaged when the tide rose. His knowledge of our language, moreover, consisted, so far as I ever discovered, of nothing but the usual "pidgin" English of the Hong Kong *sampan* man. But for all that he was an excellent cook, and whenever we could procure eggs from the villages he used to make us the most delicious omelettes over a charcoal brazier which he had brought with him.

We had no settled routine, and, within certain broad limits, I had a fairly free hand to go where, and do what, I liked. Sometimes, when it was light enough to avoid running ashore or being collided with by junks without lights, we patrolled at night and anchored during the afternoon. Occasionally we reversed the procedure, but every thirty-six hours or so we steamed up to Canton, filled up with coal and water from the *Alceste*, and remained there long enough to give officers and men a chance of having baths.

It was summer and overpoweringly hot, and when we were away from civilisation and senior officers our garments were of the scantiest description. The snotty and myself generally appeared in white flannel football shorts, singlets, sun-helmets, and rubber-soled tennis-shoes, and within forty-eight hours our bare arms, legs, and necks were burnt a deep red in spite of the awnings. The men were likewise scantily clad, and we were one and all eaten alive by mosquitoes until we took to anointing ourselves and each other with citronella oil. I have never seen such mosquitoes, great big things with striped bodies, voices like German bands, and a bite which brought one out in enormous swellings. Harstead and I, who slept in the stern-sheets, hardly got a wink of sleep at nights, and spent the weary hours gasping in the heat, drinking lime juice and tepid water, smoking cigarettes, and cursing the brutes.

But we succeeded in enjoying ourselves in spite of it all, and our only real regret was that we hadn't seen a trace of any pirates. On the contrary, whenever we landed and visited any of the villages, ostensibly to buy eggs and scraggy fowls, but really to give old Ah Chee, the pilot-interpreter, a chance of getting information from the inhabitants as to what was going on in the piratical line, we were received with embarrassing cordiality. At any rate, Ah Chee's verdict was always the same.

"Hi yah, massa," he used to say, hunching his shoulders and wagging his ugly old head. "No have got *pilong* dis side. Blong numbah one piecee man. Blong fiend, no savvy *pilong*."

III.

I was young and foolish in those days. I should never have gone there at all, and the last thing I ought to have done was to have placed any reliance on Ah Chee's very hazy knowledge. However, "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," and I was a fool with the lust for discovery in my bones, so just before sunset three evenings later we left the main river to explore a creek running inland from its left bank. It was really more than an ordinary creek, a winding tributary about half-a-mile across at its entrance and narrowing gradually as we steamed on, but, except for the first few hundred yards of its length, its course was shown on the chart as a pair of wriggly, dotted lines. This meant it was unsurveyed, and the dots should have warned me to be careful, but they didn't. I merely hove the lead, found nothing less than three fathoms, and steamed gaily on.

For three miles or so the stream pursued its tortuous way between low, marshy banks, sometimes covered in green, luxuriant grass and reeds, sometimes with patches of dark scrub. Further inland we could see the flat, monotonous country with its inevitable paddy fields, a straggling, mud-walled village or two nestling in the midst of its trees, and, in the remote distance, the long, undulating edge of a line of low hills showing as a misty, ever-darkening blue in the failing light.

Then, as I was standing on the top of the cabin looking at the scenery, we ran ashore with a shock which flung me backwards with a crash and nearly unshipped my back teeth. It was no ordinary grounding, either. A picket boat draws most water aft with her rudder and propeller, and the first thing we felt and heard was the tell-tale bumpity-bump as the screw-blades started carving chunks out of the bottom.

Scroggs, who was at the wheel, promptly put the helm hard over to get into deeper water, but almost at the same moment there came a thud and a thump, and with a sickening grinding sound the boat's bows seemed to lift out of the water and she stopped dead.

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Then it was that I descended from on high and nearly broke my pelvis.

"Lawd!" muttered the coxswain. "We've bin an' gone an' done it this time, sir!"

We had, with a vengeance, for on going overboard to examine the damage we found the bows firmly fixed in a bed of mud and large boulders, the propeller-shaft badly distorted, the blades of the screw itself bent and chawed out of all recognition, and the rudder, or what was left of it, almost torn out of the boat. The only lucky thing was that she did not seem to be leaking, but the tide was falling fast, night was coming on, and we were within thirty feet of the bank.

It was a pretty kettle of fish, I must say, and never in my life have I felt such an unutterable fool. Indeed, I felt physically sick, for I had practically disobeyed orders in leaving the main river so far behind, and here we were hard and fast on the mud in a place where I ought never to have been. We had our wireless, of course, and could ask for assistance, but it would be a dockyard job before the picket boat was able to steam again, even if we did succeed in getting her off, which I rather doubted.

What would they say to me when I got back to the ship? Imagine the Commander's feelings! The prospect made me go hot and cold all over, and what little chances of eventual promotion I ever had seemed to have vanished into the dim distance. I was no longer "a promising young officer." I was merely what the Service tersely refers to as "a sanguinary fool."

But there was no sense in crying over spilt milk. We had to make the best of a bad job, so after sending off a wireless message to the *Alceste* at Canton asking for assistance, we set to work to lighten the boat by landing the stores, coal, ammunition, and anything else we could think of. Luckily we had a small dinghy in tow to help us with this job. I hardly know what we should have done without her, for though when the tide fell it was possible to walk ashore, the bottom was composed of large boulders and soft ooze, so that at one moment one went into the mud up to the armpits, and the next caught one's shins against a boulder and fell headlong. One of the men, laden with a heavy box of ·303-inch ammunition, attempted it, but nearly drowned himself and lost his burden, so after that we gave it up and trusted entirely to the dinghy.

Before long, to add to our little difficulties, it was pitch dark. Then came an answering signal from the *Alceste* to tell us that a steam launch and a river pilot were being sent to help us, but that they could not arrive much before four o'clock the next morning. High water was an hour earlier, so, provided we succeeded in lightening the boat sufficiently, she might be able to tow us off straight away.

Ah Chee, who was very upset at his share of the business—I had told him exactly what I thought of him—then volunteered to go ashore to "makee catch plenty coolie." His idea was to enlist the male inhabitants of the neighbouring villages to make themselves generally useful, and as by this time we were all pretty exhausted with the heat, I gladly acquiesced in the proposal. So we landed the old sinner in the dinghy and sent him off.

The men worked like galley slaves, and by nine-thirty we had landed the Maxim and all its ammunition, and rifles and cutlasses, besides most of the stores and a fair proportion of the coal. The 3-pounder gun was rather too heavy for us to tackle, and sooner than run the chance of dropping it overboard and losing it in the mud, I gave orders for it to be left on board the picket boat together with one box of ammunition.

Then, as the men were very tired, I decided to give all hands an hour's "stand easy," so we landed at the spot where we had piled all our impedimenta, lit a fire, and cooked our supper. We were all feeling depressed and miserable, myself particularly so, but the food put new heart into us, and by the time we had finished the meal and were sitting round smoking our pipes, I began to think that things were not quite so bad as they might be.

The place we were in was a narrow strip of shore with thick mud below high water mark, and coarse, rank grass higher up. It was barely more than twenty feet wide, and was fringed by a deep belt of marshy country covered in tall reeds, so thick that one could not see through them. The place seemed full of frogs, and their dismal croaking made the night hideous.

"What topping snipe country," Harstead said to me, as some bird or other rose with a frightened *cheep-cheep* and a whirr of wings.

"I don't know so much," I answered. "One would want beaters. The reeds are far too high to see to shoot." To tell the truth, I felt no desire to discuss snipe.

Then, all of a sudden, the frogs stopped croaking. I heard a sort of heavy, liquid *plop*, and in the dancing firelight noticed the feathery tops of the reeds waving agitatedly as if something was forcing its way through them towards us.

"Is that you, Ah Chee?" I hailed.

No answer, but the movement of the reeds ceased abruptly.

"It's one of them there water buffaloes

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Scroggs, who was beside me at the Maxim, sat down with a crash and informed the world in general that "them —— had got him." . . . Almost at once another of our seamen was hit through the forehead and was killed instantaneously. But at last we got the Maxim into action, and I . . . swung its muzzle to and fro across the belt of reeds. [*Page* 188, *col.* 2.]

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comin' to pay us a visit, sir," said Scroggs with his usual grunting laugh.

I disagreed. Water buffalo advertise their presence from afar. They snort like locomotives, and crash through the scenery regardless of noise. Something else was approaching—approaching us warily with every effort at concealment, and the chances were a hundred to one that that something was a man.

"Lord!" a seaman suddenly whispered, clutching me by the arm. "Look there, sir!"

I looked, and promptly had the greatest fright of my life, for there, in a place about fifteen feet away from where I had noticed their movement, I saw a slight parting in the reeds, and framed between them was an awful yellow face peering out at me.

Words can convey no impression of how diabolical that face looked in the firelight. It was like a skull, ghastly and horrible, with the lips drawn back in an evil, malevolent grin until I could see the teeth. But it was very much alive, for as I looked the eyelids moved, and I noticed the flickering gleam of our fire reflected in the fierce eyes.

The sight was so utterly unexpected that I was literally frozen to the spot, and I think most of the others felt pretty squeamish.

Then I collected my scattered wits, and chided myself for a fool. It was only some poor harmless devil of a Chinaman who had come to have a look at us, one of Ah Chee's coolies, perhaps, so I got up with the intention of going across to speak to him.

But my rising seemed to have been taken as a signal, for practically instantaneously there came a sheet of flame and a roar, and a hail of slugs from some old-fashioned blunderbuss came swishing and shrieking through the air just over my head.

Then I understood. The reeds were full of men. We could hear them calling to each other and crashing about in all directions. Now, some time later, the bare statement sounds rather crude and melodramatic, but in that brief instant I realised that we were ambushed by pirates, and ambushed pretty successfully!

Idiot that I was! Ah Chee, with my permission, had gone off to ask for help, so informing them that the picket boat was aground and helpless. The light of our fire had told them of our exact whereabouts, and all the time we had been sitting at supper the Chinese had been slowly converging in on us through the swamp. They must have thought us easy meat.

There was no time to give anything much in the way of orders, for rifles had started to crack, and I could hear the bullets droning overhead. But the Chinamen, apparently, were excited as we were, for their shooting was very bad. Judging from the number of them, one decent volley should have wiped us out before we had time to lift a finger.

The men rushed for their rifles and cutlasses, while Scroggs, one other man, and myself made a bee-line for the Maxim, which, luckily enough, was still on its boat's mounting. But before we could get the gun to work the reeds parted, and eight armed Chinamen dashed out into the open. They were ferocious-looking brutes. Some of them had rifles, and the rest ugly-looking swords and long, curved knives, and in a second we were in the midst of a regular rough and tumble *mêlée*.

I heard our men cursing and grunting as they slashed away with their cutlasses, and the Chinese screaming and yelling as they came. I saw the bayonets flashing and the reddened cutlass blades rising and falling in the firelight, while one of the stokers, still clad in a grimy vest and a pair of greasy fearnought trousers, bowled one fellow over with the butt-end of a rifle.

It was such a mix-up affair that neither side could use firearms for fear of hitting their own people, but the pirates got more than they bargained for, for of the eight who rushed us only two ever got back to the comparative shelter of the reeds. The rest were all killed or wounded.

We had not got off scathless, however. One of our men was sitting on the ground nursing his left arm which had been badly slashed, while another, with a sword thrust through the right thigh, of all places, was hopping round on his left foot anathematising the enemy at the top of his voice.

Then the rifles in the reeds started again, and Scroggs, who was beside me at the Maxim, sat down with a crash and informed the world in general that "them —— had got him." They had, through the fleshy part of his right shoulder, as we afterwards discovered. Almost at once another of our seamen was hit through the forehead and was killed instantaneously.

But at last we got the Maxim into action, and gathering all our people behind it, I squatted on the ground, pressed the lever, and swung its muzzle to and fro across the belt of reeds about three feet off the ground. The little gun hiccoughed and stuttered as its spray of bullets went swishing off into the night. Some of the reeds came toppling down as if they had been mown down with a scythe. The hostile rifle fire ceased, and in between the bursts of machine gun fire we heard yells, groans, and sounds of splashing through the swamp as the Chinese tried to

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get away. But I don't expect many of them escaped. I fired a full belt of ammunition, 250 rounds. The whole affair, from start to finish, cannot have lasted more than eight minutes.

When the last cartridge had been fired there came a dread, depressing silence. There was not a sound to be heard in the reeds, so after posting sentries to keep a sharp look-out for any signs of a further attack, we set about attending to our casualties.

Of the six Chinamen left behind on the ground two had been killed outright, while four—one of whom wore a black mask, and to judge from his clothes and automatic pistol, was a man of some importance—were wounded. How many more lay *hors-de-combat* in the marsh I had no means of knowing.

We were not attacked again, but poor old Ah Chee never returned, and we discovered long afterwards that he had been killed.

IV.

I need hardly go into a lot of detail as to how the picket boat was got off the next morning, or how, with our tails very much between our legs, we were ignominiously towed down the river to Hong Kong. It must suffice when I say that when I arrived on board the ship both the Captain and Commander received me with a horny and unsympathetic eye. I had lost one valuable life in the seaman who was killed; I had three more men wounded; while the picket boat, or what was left of her, had to go to the dockyard for repair, and was there for some time.

So altogether I was as unpopular as I could possibly be, and even the production of our four prisoners, who were duly handed over to the Chinese authorities at Canton, did not seem to lighten my disfavour in the eyes of the powers that be.

But about ten days later I had a surprise when the Commander sent for me in his cabin. He had hardly spoken a word to me since I arrived on board, certainly not a civil one, and when I went to him I found him grinning in his old way—beaming, in fact.

"Allington," he said, "I forgive you everything."

"Thank you, sir," I stuttered, without the least idea of what he was driving at.

"Do you know why I forgive you?" he asked.

"Er—no, sir. I'm afraid I don't," I said, feeling a fool.

He laughed. "You know those prisoners of yours?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, one of 'em turns out to be the boss pirate fellow they've been looking for for months. He's the ringleader, or whatever you like to call it, of the gang who held up the *Shameen*."

"By George!" said I feebly. "What luck!"

"You may well look surprised," he said. "You've done a smart piece of work, and are rather a 'blue-eyed boy' with the Admiral. I expect you'll be patted on the back, and I'm very glad to be the first to congratulate you." Then he looked at me and winked.

This was high praise, praise which I never expected, and I thanked him. "But by the way, sir," I continued, "what'll they do with him?"

"He's already been executed," the Commander said. "They don't waste much time over these things."

For once in my life I certainly was "a blue-eyed boy," and a few days later the Admiral sent for me and the whole boat's crew and said things which made us all blush. He even forwarded a report to the Admiralty, for about three months afterwards, when he had forgotten all about it, there came an official letter requesting the Commander-in-Chief to "transmit to Lieutenant Roger Allington, Midshipman Rupert E. Harstead, and the following Petty Officers and men of H.M.S. *Dorset* (here followed a list of names), an expression of their Lordships' appreciation of their conduct on that occasion."

I was glad that the men's services were recognised, but I can never forget that there was one of them who never returned to England, for he, Baxter, the A.B. who was killed, was buried where he fell.

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A Plea for the Babies.

By
Horatio Bottomley
(*Editor of "John Bull"*)

Photo *Dobson, Liverpool.*

Mr. Horatio Bottomley, the author of the following striking article.

The first week in July is National Baby Week, a week dedicated to a campaign undertaken, as Mr. Bottomley aptly phrases it, "to secure to the children of the Empire their sacred birthright of health and hope." In the following powerful article, Mr. Bottomley urges the necessity for a Ministry of Motherhood which shall see that every baby is well fed, clothed, and nurtured, and in later years so educated and disciplined as to be a real asset to the State of which it becomes a member.

Let us talk of babies—the most wonderful things in all the world, indeed, the only things which matter. What a hideous condition of affairs we had fallen into before the war! By many women babies were regarded as a "nuisance"—things to be avoided, whilst when they *did* arrive, "nursing" them was out of the question. Wasn't there the wet-nurse—horrible name!—and the feeding-bottle? And so, by degrees, came the institution of the "lap-dog." Think that phrase over! Do you remember the picture in *Punch* some time ago representing the "great lady" at a children's party acting as nurse and asking, "Which are ours?" But these matters concern the rich rather than the poor.

The Duty of the State.

In fairness to the "common people," as they are called, let it be said that, with few exceptions, the burdens and obligations of motherhood are gladly and willingly borne. But hitherto practically all responsibility for the welfare of the little ones has been left with the parents. The State has never realised the duty which rests upon it towards those who, often at the risk of health, and invariably at heavy personal sacrifice, are discharging the greatest function which any citizen can render it—keeping the home fires of human life burning.

Arming Them for the Fight.

There ought long ago to have been established a Ministry of Motherhood, with a woman President and a staff of women doctors and almoners, charged with the work of seeing that *every* baby born into the kingdom is well fed and clothed and nurtured during the first few years of its life. Then we should have been a race of both physical and intellectual giants, and we should have made short work of the Hun!

How vital are these first few years! And, given proper care and attention, what a different set of children would be sent to our Primary Schools—children capable of absorbing and digesting the elements of such a real education as would fit them for the great struggle for life. For the Ministry of Motherhood would, of course, work hand in

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hand with a reformed Education Department, whose policy would be to adapt its methods to the needs and circumstances of each part of the country, with a view to equipping its youth with the best kind of knowledge for the successful discharge of the particular part of the life of the nation it would in after years be called upon to play.

It is a big theme—bigger than anything else which can occupy our thoughts as soon as we have finished with the Germans. And I am delighted to see that at last the first branch of the subject—babyhood and motherhood—is to be seriously tackled. Verily the war is working wonders, and there are more unlikely things than that we shall yet have my suggested new Ministry.

At any rate, we are to have a Baby Week in July—and under the presidency of the Prime Minister. That is as it should be. Mr. Lloyd George can hope for no better tribute from posterity than that he killed the Germans and gave the world British babies in their stead.

Trustees for the State.

Well, let it be a very big affair, this Baby Week. It is to be called "The National Baby Week." That, too, is as it should be. The title implies a moral—every baby is a matter of national concern, a national asset. Its parent is simply trustee for the State.

"The race marches forward on the feet of little Children." So runs the motto of this great movement, and I am inclined to take the words as my text for this article, for they are true to the highest purposes of God. In these days of devouring slaughter, when grim Death gathers his victims in battalions, every man of reflective mind must tremble for the future of the race.

But to the menacing cloud of destruction there is a silver lining. The miscreants who plot death for their diversion can lay no sacrilegious hand upon the eternal mystery of Birth; and the tears of women who mourn their men, fallen in the great fight for Freedom, are distilled into gentle solace by the magic of baby smiles. For the God of Battles has His tender moods, and there is deep truth in the central dogma of Christendom that His other name is Love. Have you ever thought that perhaps the souls of the little ones are the appointed messengers of Divine Pity? Anyway, let us talk for a while of these priceless babies of ours and of the National Baby Week.

The Birthright of Little Children.

In the first place, I am greatly impressed by the *personnel* of this enterprise, by the list of folks eminent in every department of national affairs, who have been brought together as loyal courtiers of His Majesty, the Baby. As I have said, the Prime Minister is President. The little Welshman will not rock the cradle, but will lend his patronage to those who, in a thousand ways, are trying to secure to the children of the Empire their sacred birthrights of Health and Hope. With the memory of his own troubled childhood to guide him, and with that instinct for action, touched by the fire of sympathy, that is the essence of his genius, Mr. Lloyd George will not be content with formal adhesion to this great movement, and I am inclined to attach large significance to the fact that the Chairman of the National Baby Week Council is the President of the Local Government Board. In this pact we have the State joining hands with the parent.

At one time of day I might have been inclined to cavil at this circumstance, for I have always been jealous for individual liberty and suspicious of State interference. Indeed, I have sometimes poked bitter gibes at the notion of the State as a fussy "grandmother" interfering unduly with the legitimate liberties of the subject, encroaching upon the just domain of personal freedom, regulating, prohibiting, compelling, by the strong arm of the law, in the realm of private affairs.

Beware of "Grandmotherly" Administration.

But, averse as I still am to "grandmotherly" administration, I have come to see beauty as well as utility in the conception of the State as a "foster-parent," vigilant for the protection and jealous for the welfare of its wards, prepared at the price of common effort and sacrifice to stand between the children and the east wind of adversity; to smooth the path of life for the halt and the lame and for the stumbling feet of children; to shield the weak from the buffeting of circumstance and from the thoughtless hustling of the strong.

That is a beautiful ideal, and very soon, I believe, we shall come to regard it as practical politics and sound statesmanship. At any rate, we must save the children. Neither prejudice nor pedantry nor pusillanimity must be allowed to stand in the way of that supreme demand.

In this great effort for the welfare of the Empire and the future of the race, private enterprise and State action must go hand in hand. The National Baby Week with its special sermons in the churches, lectures in the colleges, cinema demonstrations, its city meetings, "infant welfare" exhibitions, and "pram parades" will be a magnificent missionary effort, but its success will depend

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upon the goodwill of the public and their due appreciation of the aims in view.

Certain misconceptions will be fatal. If it were the case of a number of "superior" persons, banded together with the impertinent object of teaching other people—soldiers' wives and working-class mothers—how to manage their babies, I would have nothing to do with the scheme. Unless the ladies engaged could show me excellent, and, indeed, exceptional credentials as Professors of Motherhood, I should be as impatient as I am when I hear Father Vaughan or the celibate Bishop of London waxing rhetorical on the need for an increased birth-rate.

No Ill-Judged Intrusions.

And if I may venture a word of friendly warning, I would suggest that the lady-helpers in the National Baby Week movement should be on strict guard against ill-judged intrusion upon the domestic privacy of the poor. That way lie disappointment and disaster. The aim should rather be to arouse public opinion to the vital urgency of the problem in hand, to enlist the willing co-operation of every class in the community, to link parents, teachers, doctors, health officials, and all others who can help in one great Common Council of Child Welfare—a Republic of Reform.

To the published "aims" of the National Baby Week Council, not the crustiest of critics could take exception. Listen! "To arouse the sense of racial responsibility in every citizen in order to secure to every child born in the United Kingdom a birthright of mental and bodily health." None, I suppose, will object to that? And remember, "every child" includes the "unwanted" mite, tossed on to life's shore by a wave of passion, and living ever after with the sense of being a homeless stranger in an alien land. To these poor waifs our social ordinances, and even the law of the land, have been monstrously unjust. We must change all that. The National Council are right; we shall need *every* child. We will have no talk about "illegitimate" children. "Illegitimate parents," if you like—but the children are legitimate enough.

Reinforcing Parental Effort.

Listen again! "To inform the public generally as to what is now being done for young children and mothers by voluntary agencies, local authorities, and the State." Any objection to that? Surely not! There is no question here of unwarrantable interference or—we remember the historic phrase—"undermining parental responsibility." The fact is that the State, for its Imperial purpose, needs more done for the children, for the men and women of to-morrow, than many parents can be expected to do without the help of the nation as a whole. Therefore, it is for us all to take counsel together as to how we can best reinforce parental effort and supplement the agency of the home, which must always remain the principal factor in the nurture of the child. The need is urgent.

The war has taught us the supreme value of physical health. We have re-learnt the truth of Ruskin's immortal dictum, that "there is no wealth but life," and the most valuable of all is young life. Yet infant mortality still stalks like a devouring spectre through the land. Out of 785,454 infants born in England and Wales during 1916, 71,768 died before reaching the age of twelve months! Think those figures over, and remember, too, that ten per cent. of the children admitted to elementary schools last year were found by medical inspection to be physically unfit!

The Lord of the Future.

Imagine the folly of drumming dates, and "Kings and Queens," and all the other rigmarole of primary education into the tired brains of those weary, emaciated little bodies! "If you would be an Imperial people," said Lord Rosebery on a great occasion, "you must rear an Imperial race." Are we doing it? Have we even begun to grasp the elements of Imperial eugenics? Let each man answer on his conscience. Only remember that neither armed battalions nor steel-clad battleships can permanently secure the power and greatness of a nation, for the Lord of the Future is a Little Child!

And don't you think it would be beginning the good work in the right way if an attempt were made to popularise babyhood? Time was when motherhood was held in more general esteem than it is to-day. In the enervating years of peace, when duties to the State were preached and practised but weakly, motherhood among the "Smart Set" was counted almost as an offence, and the obligations of maternity were avoided like the plague.

Well, I am optimist enough to believe that all that has been changed by the wonder-working alchemy of war. This awful, pitiless destruction of life has impressed upon the hearts and minds of the women of this country the preciousness of human life. It is the compensating re-action of Nature to create life out of death—to revitalise out of decay. And I believe there are influences in operation at this moment which will help to just the right understanding of the beauty of

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Motherhood, of the sanctity of young life, which too often in the past were ignored or denied.

Popularising Motherhood.

Let us look forward to the day when the lap-dog will be ousted from its privileges, and the baby on the lap re-assert its rightful place. We have to rebuild our Empire on the ashes of war, to remake our Kingdom of Liberty. In the Kingdom, throughout the Empire, let Baby rule. Let Baby become fashionable once more, and let those who by their position and influence are able to set an example make it their business to popularise Motherhood. Why not "boost" the bassinette and play the Town Crier to the cradle?

I want to see the old days revived—when big families were the rule and not the exception; when to have his quiver full was counted to a man for righteousness.

But if we expect the men and women of the younger generation to do their duty by the State, the State must do its duty by them. There must be a new form of King's Bounty—not the bounty which begins and ends at birth, but which puts the protective hand of the State over every child born into this great Commonwealth. Teach mothers how to play the mother for the greater good of the suckling infant; and then see to it that the child becomes the father to the type of man we want to see grow up to succeed to the Imperial heritage.

What we need is that kind of training that will make strong, self-reliant, decently educated lads and lasses—no mollycoddling that produces the milksop, the namby-pamby type. But just enough of the right sort of Socialism to insure that while the child is born in decent health and surroundings, and is reared by a mother who knows something of the laws of health, it shall be educated so as to be able to do something better than mere quill driving, and so disciplined in the rights and duties of citizenship as to be a real asset to the State of which it becomes a member.

Why Not Super-Babies?

Surely the outcome of this Baby week should be something of enormous benefit to the State. The "war baby," of which we used to talk with upturned eyes and noses, has proved to be a myth; but let us see to it that the after-war baby shall be worthy of the great days through which we shall have passed. We have heard of supermen—let us see what we can do in the way of super-babies. And whilst the parents of the future are taking to heart the lessons of the past, whilst the sturdy lads from the trenches are mating with the bonnie lassies of our land, let the Ministry of Motherhood get to work with its local staffs, its *crèches*, its nursing homes, its playgrounds, its food and comforts, its Baby Bureau in every district. *And no questions asked.* No nosey parkers—no sour-faced visitors. Just good cheer all round. A smile for the mother, a kiss for the child—and God's best blessing on both.

THE PROSAIC LOVER.

Your eyes, Princess, are not like stars,
  Though they are clear and deep;
Your teeth are not like wondrous pearls,
  Your lashes do not sweep;
Nor holds the rose and lily cheap
  The garden in your face—
Nor can I see, whene'er you weep,
  Of diamond-drops a trace.

Your voice recalls no silver bell,
  Your laugh is not a chime;
Your blushes shame no glowing rose
  That blooms in summer-time;
Nor do the clematis that climb
  About your window, fresh and sweet,
Whisper my love, O Heart o' Mine—
  They merely wither at your feet.

Princess, you know as well as I,
  Your heart's not made of gold;
The songs that vaunt your classic charms
  Make modest blood run cold.
To me each statement's over-bold—
  Too broad each simile;
I love you more than rhymes untold—
  And that's enough for me.

Gwen Nisbet.

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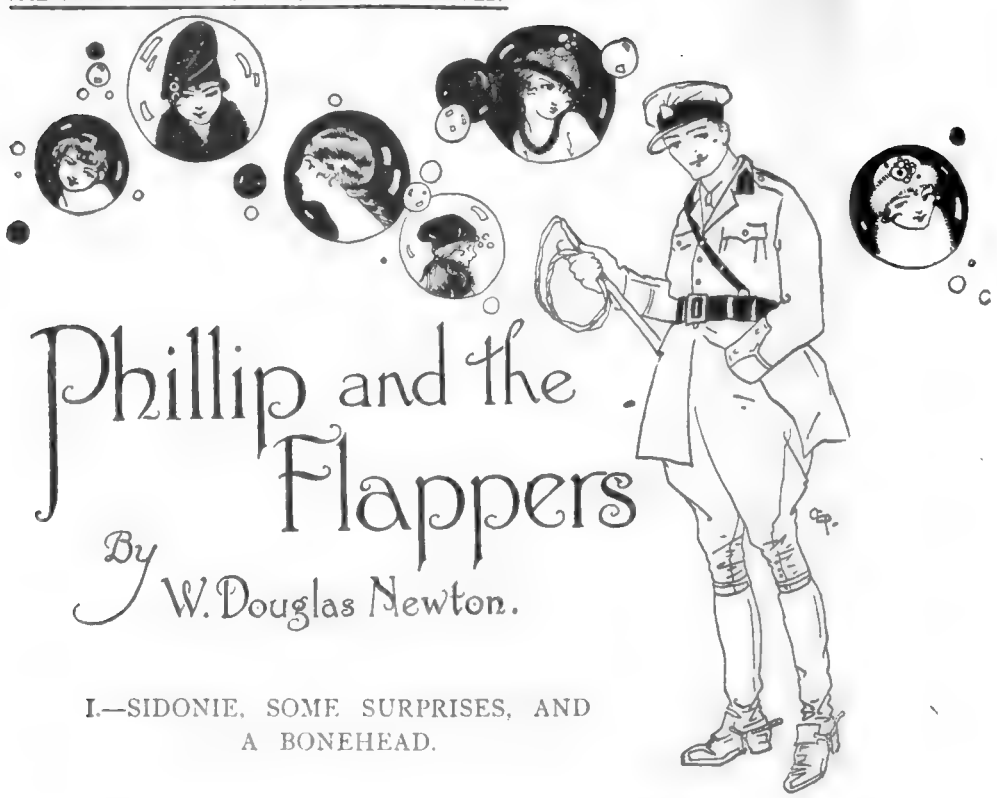
THE FIRST STORY OF A DELIGHTFUL SERIES.



Phillip and the Flappers

By W. Douglas Newton.

I.—SIDONIE, SOME SURPRISES, AND A BONEHEAD.

Phillip is a young Staff-Officer who masks beneath a flippant exterior a genius for coming out on top. Home wounded from the Front, he indulges his *penchant* for flappers to the fullest extent. No flapper can resist him—certainly not Sidonie, the heroine of the following sprightly story, the first of a splendid series by that well-known author, Mr. W. Douglas Newton. Phillip has a way with him—he is all-conquering, irresistible; there is never a dull moment in his company.

I.

PHILLIP wasn't buying things in Bond Street. He wasn't buying them all up one side and all down the other. It was a day of blue and gold. Winter, with its frosted silver lining, was in the air. A quick, crisp thrill was in all things. A brightness, as clear as good wine, was making sparkling the world. It wasn't a Flag Day. There were furs about, flappers were in them; all was right with the world.

You will now understand why Phillip wasn't buying things in Bond Street. There were things unbuyable even there. Phillip was looking at them wistfully. He was saying:

"They're as pretty as peaches—every one. I wish I were a multiple Mormon to make love to them all."

Phillip (with two "l's," please, and said slow) limped towards Piccadilly as fast as one ounce net of Bosche shrap. would let him. He thought life was a very fine old thing, but, as has been hinted, he was wistful. For what was to be the good of his radiant tunic, with its little scarlet tabs (Oh, yes, you must know Phillip was on the Staff in moments of mud, stress, and Flanders), what was to be the good of a hat that out-hatted everything that was most nutty in subaltern's "floppies," what the good of the sun, and swift glances from bright but unintroduced eyes, if, after all, man was to be lonely at lunch?

There was a table waiting for him in a charming nook. Two chairs were ready, the wine was on what one puts it on in winter, the brigadier-general *chef* of the Lastword Palace was stirring things, murmuring happy little songs that so dainty a meal was to go before such an one as Phillip—all was ready—all was fixed up. And now—Cicely had mumps!

Mumps!

Phillip had now turned into Piccadilly.

Then, all at once, the world was obscured by Ernest.

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II.

Ernest was a good lad. He was one of Britain's Brave Thingummies. He was a Tempy and a Thruster. He was a plus four man, and one to play at cribbage (or is that billiards?). And he had a head of pure bone.

Like all boneheads, he was a clinger—his grandmother was one of the Leeches of Burr-on-Limpet. He saw Phillip. He employed tactics of approach. He came, he clung. He made subterranean noises probably referring to the weather. And Phillip said chattily:

"Oh, topping sunshine! I'm going the other way. Which way are you going?"

Ernest was more like the ivy than ever. It was not merely that he couldn't help clinging; he seemed actuated by a fell purpose this time. Beneath layer upon layer of Ernest's bony boredom, Phillip seemed to see a hint of nervousness.

"Lunchin'?" said Ernest mightily.

"Yes, thanks. Sorry! Ask me again in 1925."

Ernest thought solidly for a minute or so.

"Ass!" he said. "Bit of an ass, Phillip. I'm lunchin', you know—girl!"

Phillip gasped.

"With a—you mean with a girl! G as in gee-gee, I as in I.O.U., R as in——"

"Appointment—1 o'clock," insisted Ernest in a tremendous flow.

"I mean—well, is her sight quite as her doctor likes it to be?"

"Don't know." Ernest concentrated himself. He clutched Phillip by the lapel, and said miserably, but almost volubly: "Never seen her—herself, you know. Lonely subaltern, and all that."

"Oh, I know—I know. What I'm asking is: How did you disguise yourself? How was it done? How did you snare her young heart? In other words, how do miracles happen in this century?"

Ernest considered deeply.

"Sidonie — Sidonie's the girl's name—put an advertisement in a paper. She wanted to do something to help. I answered. We kept it up."

"I see light," said Phillip. "Your lips are as the oyster's, but you have a pen of gold."

"Not really," responded Ernest bonily. "There was a book, 'The Lonely Lieutenant and Corresponding Crissie.' Good stuff in that book. Used all the best bits. Went well, too."

Phillip didn't think he quite liked Ernest. Fun is fun. Deceit is just dirt.

"I perceive," he said shortly "Good-day, Ernest."

Ernest clutched him.

"I say," he cried. "I say, I've got to meet her."

"So you hinted. I hope she has a sense of humour."

"And she's pretty." Ernest caught Phillip's eye. "She sent her photo, you see. Sidonie—Sidonie Ware." He produced her photo.

"Did you—er——?" asked Phillip.

"No," answered Ernest. "Didn't send mine. Hadn't one by, and——"

"Clever fellow!"

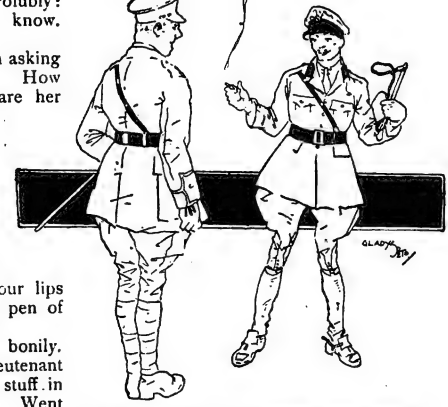
Ernest expanded to the limit of his Sam Browne.

"Oh, well——" he puffed. "Only I admit—well, I'm at a bit of a loss. One o'clock we meet in the vestibule of the Lastword Palace. She'll wear little hat as in photo, white fur round neck, emerald-coloured dress with white fur on same. I carry this stick with the funny gold head. She sent it me. I hold it across shoulder at the slope. I am to recognise her. That's the compact—stick's only corroborative evidence."

Phillip frowned.

"I mean—er——. Oh, be a sport, Phillip. Give a feller an opening. A few bright, frothy words—you know how."

"You leave me gasping, Ernest," cried Phillip.



Ernest . . . made subterranean noises probably referring to the weather. And Phillip said chattily: "Oh, topping sunshine! I'm going the other way. Which way are you going?"

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Pretty and dainty and crisp was Sidonie. The white and jolly fur clung about her cheeks as though it loved them.

"Must break the ice," persisted Ernest. "What am I to say to her when I go to her in the Lastword Palace vestibule?"

Phillip experienced shock.

"You're meeting this — Sidonie—at the Lastword Palace?"

"Rather. Know it?"

Phillip's eyes danced. If Ernest had known Phillip he would have been warned by that dance. Ernest knew not Phillip. He thought Phillip a sort of Class A "Nut." Plenty of show, but no real British solidity inside. In this he erred, as better men have erred.

"A few bright words, Phillip, to break the ice. Help a fellow out, old thing."

But Phillip was thinking how his lunch had threatened to be lonely and dull. It would have given small scope for joy. Perhaps the Gods of Happiness had put Ernest in his path. Gods had that way. It was very hard lines on Sidonie, but was it human of him to resist the spectacle of Ernest being coy with a flapper, of Ernest being, perhaps, rash and wild in the company of beauty? It might have been human to resist, but it wouldn't have been Phillip. He said to Ernest:

"Be yourself, that's all. Be the strong, direct military man. Say, 'Lunch is ready; will you take my arm, and we will hence to the damask table-top?' Be yourself; be little Willy No. 1 all the time."

"Thought of that! The natural man in one, and all that."

"Every time! Get a table at the end of the room, by the window." (Phillip's table was by the window.) "I understand that is the spot where the best minds go."

"Good! I will. Natural man, that's it." Ernest squared his shoulders. He commanded a taxi.

"Very hard luck on Sidonie—who is so pretty," reflected Phillip. "But—I'll give them ten minutes, anyhow."

III.

As Phillip entered the Lastword Palace, he was hypnotised by the enormous spectacle of Ernest doing intensive patrol work across the vestibule. There were several human beings about; only Ernest mattered. It was a great scene. The gold-headed stick was across Ernest's massy shoulder. Nothing but the sign and countersign of the day and a written order from Sir William Robertson would shift Ernest from his determined courses, one saw—until Sidonie turned up, of course.

Phillip watched almost with awe. Sidonie he could not see, though it was past the hour. It was a minute before he grasped the full facts.

Sidonie looked up at Phillip. There was dismay in her eyes, but the right to sparkle and laugh lurked beneath dismay.

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"He came, she saw, she ran," he thought. "I forgot that might happen. Of course. What else could she do, poor dear? Poor Sidonie! so pretty, and so rough on her."

Then he thought: "But how? Rifleman Ernest guards all the strategic exits of this sector, unless Sidonie went into the dining-room. But she wouldn't risk that. Even Ernest might think of a dining-room. Perhaps, after all, she didn't."

Ernest right-abouted in his patrol. As he turned, a flash of white fur came out from a little nook in the distance; it hesitated, flashed back to its hiding-place. . . .

"So . . . she did," finished Phillip. "Poor Sidonie! there she is, cut off from humanity and escape by a perambulating wet-blanket."

Ernest swung back on his march.

Phillip thought quickly:

"Poor Sidonie! and she is pretty, and knight-erranting is a kind of a hobby of mine. . . ."

When Ernest's back was turned squarely, Phillip walked calmly and boldly across the vestibule. Boldness is a great ace hand. Used in the right manner, it always wins. Phillip couldn't use it in the other manner. Ernest was entirely unconscious of his presence.

There was a slim, delightful, dainty little girl attached to the white fur. There was a gown, pretty and glowing and emerald; there was white fur as soft as snow on that gown. And the face of the flapper was the delectable face of the photo!

"Oh," said the little flapper, and she drew back as though fearful. And "O—oh," she said, in an almost grateful note, as she saw Phillip. Sidonie was certainly pretty.

Pretty and dainty and crisp was Sidonie. The white and jolly fur clung about her cheeks, as though it loved them, and Phillip knew how wise fur was. Bright eyes and deep; lips red and quick and warm; cheeks soft and vivid, flushed with colour, clear with youth; figure slim and young, flowing and vivacious and fine. Oh, Sidonie was pretty. Sidonie was more than pretty—Sidonie was to be no Andromeda for Ernest.

Sidonie looked up at Phillip. There was dismay in her eyes, but the right to sparkle and laugh lurked beneath dismay. Youth is not easily intimidated, especially youth that is feminine and "flappering." She looked at Phillip almost with relief.

"Miss Ware—Miss Sidonie Ware of the letters?"

She gave an expressive—a delicious little catch.

"Are you——? But no! The stick?"

"Ernest has the stick," mentioned Phillip.

"O—oh!" breathed Sidonie again. Colour lit her cheeks in a glorious wave.

"And our little Ernest is over there. See the Corporal's Guard? That's Ernest."

He came up to the table in a large stride . . . Phillip looked up. "Hullo, Ernest!" he said cheerily. "Going now? Good-bye."
[*Page 198, col. 2.*]

"O—oh," breathed Sidonie. "I know—I know. I've seen *it*."

She sank deeper into the nook, a jolly sort of dismay on her face—laughter and vexation and apprehension deliciously commingled.

"What a pickle I'm in," she said with a *moue*. "How am I to——"

"I've won honours in the pickle business myself," said Phillip. "My special line is unpickling. I came along in case——"

She gave him a warm look; she did

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not quite detest him; you see, Phillip was certainly Phillip.

"I'm supposed to be lunching with him."

"Ernest has that idea, too," Phillip agreed.

Sidonie made a despairing gesture with her pretty hands.

"But it's absurd — absurd. And impossible."

"Ernest is perhaps. Do you think lunch would be?"

Sidonie blushed. ("I love your blushes. I love everything about you," cried Phillip, in his soul.)

But though Sidonie blushed she wasn't incapable. The flapper may lack certain virtues (as some say), but she does not lack the faculty of taking care of herself.

"I don't happen to know you," she said calmly, but not frigidly.

"Now that you have seen Ernest are you sure you know him?"

"No, I'm sure I don't." Sidonie frowned. "But his letters. . . ."

Phillip hesitated no more than a moment. Ernest's method in correspondence had not been the sort of thing the best people do. Also—Sidonie must be saved.

"Do you happen to have read a masterpiece called 'The Lonely Lieutenant and Corresponding Crissie,' Miss Sidonie?"

"Not at all," answered the girl, a little puzzled. "Should I?"

"No need now. I understand that that work of genius is the source and backbone of Ernest's prose touch."

"O—oh," cried Sidonie. "The pig. I shall wait until he is tired—then I will slip away."

"I warn you you are living in a kingdom of dreams. Ernest does not let up. Ernest is the tireless sleuthound of the vestibule. He is the everlasting patience. He has made a science of watching and waiting. Slip away! You cannot slip away from the Ernests of this world."

Sidonie sighed. Sidonie laughed.

"But how—?"

"Lunch!"

"He's bound to know there's a dining-room. He might come in."

"Leave that to Uncle Phillip."

"If he sees us?"

"Leave that to—*us*," said Phillip.

They smiled into each other's eyes. They were young. They were quick. They were vital. They were bent on eluding Ernest.

"Quick!" cried Sidonie, looking into the vestibule. "He's going south-by-east. Quick! I'm awful hungry."

IV.

It was a delicious lunch. Sidonie was Sidonie; Phillip was Phillip. Nothing more need be said. They enjoyed themselves so thoroughly that they forgot all about Ernest until the vision of Ernest as the Wrath to Come appeared in the doorway.

There was no forgetting the bright lad when he came in. He entered in the Gloomy Dane manner. It was only by the greatest self-restraint that he held his hand from thorough and systematic slaughter of those who had the temerity to dine. He scowled round the room. He chose a table, and scowled again. He saw Sidonie. He saw Phillip. He wilted wildly. Then he came up to the table in a large stride.

"I say," he said tersely.

"No, *no* coffee," said Phillip over his left shoulder. "But curaçao, yes. Better bring two, please."

"I say," cried Ernest with great force and eloquence.

Phillip looked up.

"Hullo, Ernest!" he said cheerily. "Going now? Good-bye."

Ernest leant massily on the table.

"No," he breathed thickly. "No, I am not going, Phillip Manwaering. I am staying."

"Stay a week," said Phillip amiably, already eager to turn back to the flapper. "Stay a month. It's not my hotel, anyhow. Where were you sitting? I didn't seem to notice."

"What I mean to say," said Ernest, clinging tenaciously to his main idea, "what I mean to say is that I wait there, and when I come in here I find that Miss Sidonie is not here but there. I mean to say, that Miss Sidonie is here not there."

"What do you say to that?" Phillip cried enthusiastically to the flapper. "After that do you dare to say that Germany can win, Emma?"

"Emma!" gulped Ernest.

"Let me introduce you," said Phillip. "Emma, this is the hot-blooded lad, young Ernest, we were talking about. Ernest, this is Emma."

"Emma—but—what about Sidonie?"

"Ah, yes, Sidonie," said Phillip. "Now tell us about Sidonie. Is there any better news?"

"What's the matter with Sidonie?" asked Ernest darkly.

"Oh, but you're telling *us*. Start right away. You got her wire, you rushed off to see her, you——"

"Wire—wire—. But look here. Emerald dress—Sidonie's dress."

Phillip smiled at the flapper.

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"Pretty dress, too. Did you borrow it from dear Sidonie?"

"Certainly not," said the flapper.

"Sidonie Ware's dress. Sidonie Ware's face . . ."

"Qh, Ernest!" cried Phillip. "You are not going to accuse Emma of borrowing Sidonie's face? It's not done now, really not."

"I mean to say it's exactly the same face."

"Well, more or less," said Phillip blandly. "You see, Emma is Sidonie's twin cousin. She's just been telling me all about it."

"Grrrr!" said Ernest.

"You see, Sidonie's mother's sister married one of the Phumffts of Pevensey, so Sidonie and Emma had to be twins. Quite simple, isn't it, when you really understand? Emma was explaining it to me. It was like this. I told her that you were to meet Sidonie. She told me of poor Sidonie's condition. Then she told me how alike she was to Sidonie; how stupid people were always rushing up and saying she was the other."

"Oh—ya—yes," said Ernest.

Phillip gave complete attention to the girl.

"Of course it would have been fun," he was saying, "to have the two of you here. The similarity would have been so delightfully mixing. Not that the strong head of Ernest would be bemused."

"But—er—Sidonie," said Ernest, "where is Sidonie? Isn't she here?"

Phillip looked surprised and hurt.

"How could she be here? You know what she told you in her wire."

"Wire? Wire? I've had no wire."

Phillip turned to the flapper. The flapper turned to Phillip. "I do believe that silly goose of a cousin of yours has sent the wire to Ernest's hotel, instead of this." He turned to Ernest. "You run along home. There's that wire waiting and pining for you on your mat."

"Why should she wire?" he called out defiantly.

"Ill . . . Mumps," said Phillip. "Mumps at the last moment. And a mump *will* upset a lunch terrifically."

"Huh!" mentioned Ernest. He manœuvred to go. The flapper chose this moment to talk.

"My poor cousin is very distressed," she said in her cool voice. "I think she will be indisposed for a long time, probably for a year. But she is bearing up. I left her getting some satisfaction out of life. She was reading—reading rather a surprising book. It was called 'The Lonely Lieutenant and Corresponding Crissie.' Have you heard . . .?"

If Ernest had heard, he didn't say. It was the moment fixed for rapid exit.

(Next month Phillip visits a bazaar, where he scores a signal victory over a brother officer intent on the same charming flapper he himself admires.)

A FIXTURE IN TOWN.

August is here and the family depart,
  Going their various ways,
Father to Cromer, whose links, he declares,
  Merit unlimited praise.
Mother and Kitty are staying at Ryde,
  Haunting the beach and the pier,
Everyone's gone except cook and myself—
  We are to carry on here.

Brighton and Deal have no power to attract,
  Ilfracombe woos me in vain;
London may bask 'neath a tropical sun,
  Here I intend to remain.
Missing my holiday? Yes, so I am,
  Not that I'm caring a jot—
Jack's coming home on his long-promised
    leave,
  That's why I stay on the spot!

Dorothy Rose.

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A COMEDY IN CALICO

By Mrs. Stanley Wrench.

"No, there's noth.ng half so sweet in life
As love's young dream."

"Sign, please!"

Peter Wagerfield tapped loudly upon the counter, tapped again as no one seemed to heed, then, as the urbane Mr. Jones—he with the swallow-tailed coat and perambulating mood—moved forward, he pushed the bill towards him, touched the tip of his tongue with the black-lead point and waited for the magic word of release. It came:

"An-n-y other de-partment, madam? Showing a very nice line in black silk stockings at one-and-eleven-three the pair? Tha-ank you, madam," and with a servile bow and a smile that was meant to be ingratiating, Mr. Jones moved off and Peter Wagerfield was free to roll up the "two yards of calico at 3¾d. a yard," not forgetting to include the receipted bill.

But before he could do this the slip of thin paper with the florid and much-lettered heading must travel across the width of the whole shop, together with the coin tendered in payment. "Jinkins Bros., Drapers and Costumiers," were nothing if not up-to-date, and sticklers for procedure. A little overhead railway had been fixed up some time previously; every counter was provided with one or more wooden receptacles in which bill and money could be placed, a lever was pulled, and the carrier was jerked forward, on a kind of aerial rail, to the desk of the cashier.

Longing to blow upon his fingers, which were blue with cold, knowing that etiquette forbade this, even in the presence of "a 3¾d. customer," Peter Wagerfield glanced towards the girl in her high perch, almost directly opposite. He noticed that she, too, looked "frozen to death," as he put it to himself, and kicked one foot against another to try and restore flagging circulation.

(This was not a breach of etiquette at Messrs. Jinkins Bros., for your feet were your own, being invisible. It was only things that customers could see that mattered.)

Click! The little ball was travelling back, thank goodness! In marvellously quick time, considering the numbed state of his poor fingers, Peter did up the parcel, bowed in imitation of but not quite so impressively as Mr. Jones, and sighed with relief as the customer ambled off, pausing in her leisurely exit to finger and examine a bale of cretonnes on the opposite counter.

Peter disappeared behind a stack of Nottingham lace curtains, and not only blew upon his fingers, but thrust them into his mouth for warmth.

"Whew!" he muttered, "it is cold, and no mistake. This old mousetrap of a place is enough to cut you in two with all these draughty doors."

Seizing a bale of coarse brown calico, and making that an excuse, he disappeared from view, darting down a flight of steps leading to a subterranean apartment known as the "Warehouse," and here, secure from prying eyes, Peter went through a number of gymnastic exercises, flinging his arms across his chest, stamping his feet, and trying, by every process he could think of, to get warm.

He dared not remain long away from his counter, where the smell of calico assaulted his nostrils all day long. He was in what was known as the "Manchester Goods" department; but Peter hated the thick, almost nauseating odour that hung about the fabrics he handled, and would have given much to have served in "Silks," where shimmering and many-hued materials vied with the rainbow-coloured ribbons and artificial flowers of the next department. Even "Cretonnes and Art Serges" opposite would have brought relief; but no, he was bound to stick to calico.

As he mounted the stairs his eye wandered

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again to the cashier's desk, and for the first time Peter recognised that its inmate, in her cage-like dwelling, was in a worse position than he. There was no escape for her, not even five minutes' gymnastic exercise in the "cellar"; she was bound to occupy her airy perch until released by a substitute for the lunch interval. He noticed now that she wore black mittens, reaching mid-way over her hands, which were red and swollen at the fingers, and that her face looked as though she had been crying.

"Poor girl!" said Peter to himself. 'It is a shame."

His own numbed and aching fingers made him more sympathetically inclined towards Miss Miggs, and finding himself next to her at luncheon he glanced towards her fingers, and started in dismay. Whew! they were broken and sore with chilblains. No wonder her eyes looked as though she had been crying! He noticed, too, that she kept her hands out of sight as much as possible, as though she were ashamed of their condition, thrusting them beneath the coarse cloth that covered the table; and he noticed, too, that she ate scarcely anything, pushing aside the plate of greasy-looking stew after one attempt, and that her helping of suet pudding was left practically untasted.

Peter grew quite concerned. Cold fingers were bad enough, chilblains were infinitely worse, but chilblains and an empty stomach spelt trouble. Peter had an old-fashioned mother away in the country and he remembered some of her maxims now.

A little clumsily, and with blushing face, he felt in his waistcoat pocket where reposed a small bar of plain chocolate. He drew this out as he rose from the table, and, under cover of the table-cloth, slipped it into her hand.

"Here," he said huskily, and with some confusion, "you eat this. Haven't touched your lunch. That won't do. Plain chocolate is nourishing, so my mother says."

He bolted then, without giving the astonished girl a chance to thank him, and during the afternoon Peter studiously kept his eyes averted from the cashier's desk.

But Mary Miggs ate the chocolate, and her heart warmed towards the assistant in the "Manchester Goods," whom, to tell the truth, she had barely noticed before, except to note that he was slightly lame, one leg being a trifle shorter than the other.

It was very little, only a slight limp, but it was enough to keep him out of the Army, enough to render Peter very sensitive about his walk, but this Miss Miggs did not know. The next day, when Peter again managed to be near her at lunch-time, her pale face grew slightly pink, and the tiniest shade of sulkiness lurked in her brown eyes.

"He needn't think I want to throw myself at him," she said to herself, for she, having overheard one or two of the other young lady assistants talk of "Mr. Wagerfield's superior manner," had an idea that Peter's reticence and "stand-offishness" hitherto was due, not to his shyness over his lame leg, but to his sense of his own superior station.

But Miss Miggs got another surprise. As Peter rose from the table he leant confidentially towards her, and again trusting that the folds of the table-cloth hid his fingers, he thrust into hers a tiny pot wrapped in paper.

"Here," he whispered, "my mother made it. It's a recipe of her own. She gathers the berries in autumn, stews them, and does something with grease and stuff, but it's a wonderful cure, even if it is home-made."

Not till Miss Miggs reached the comparative privacy of her perch did she dare open the little package. Then her eyes blurred with tears, half-shame, half-gratitude. For the pot was labelled "Ointment for Chilblains," and in a rather old-fashioned handwriting was written directions for its use.

The girl blushed.

"He must have noticed my poor fingers yesterday," she said, glancing down at her bandaged hands. For one chilblain had got so very bad Miss Miggs had been obliged to wrap it up and risk having attention called to it by Messrs. Jinkins Bros., who laid down such severe laws as to what should and should not be worn by girls in their employ.

Suddenly Mary Miggs stiffened, and her face flamed.

"He mustn't think I want to catch him," she murmured, remembering the conversation she had overheard between two girls in the ladies' cloak-room the day before. As far as she knew it had no particular reference to Peter Wagerfield, but there—as one of the girls had remarked, "all men were alike. Give 'em a look and they think you're out to catch 'em." Mary Miggs grew hot at the remembrance. She didn't want to "catch" a man! Good gracious! She hadn't seen the man yet who was worth "catching," if she could demean herself to use such a vulgar word.

Consequently she altered her lunch hour during the next two days, and it was not till three days afterwards that Peter Wagerfield found an opportunity to hold speech with her. It happened, too, in rather curious fashion. Mary Miggs had left the drapery establishment at closing time when a new window display in the Furnishing Emporium across the way attracted her, and she crossed the road

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to see what new scheme of advertising Ball & Co., the great furnishing specialists, had decided upon.

Mary was interested in furniture, and had dreams of how she would work out delightful colour schemes for a home if ever she had one. The drawing-room should be pewter-grey and mauve, a real "rest room"; her bedroom should be rose and white, light and bright and beautiful, and—but what was the use? Mary wasn't likely to have a home. At the same time the model rooms set out in the great windows of Ball & Co. interested her hugely, and she was always intent on fresh changes.

Her rose and white bedroom at last! Mary clasped her hands in admiration. Yes, there was every detail complete, even to the big eider-down of rose-coloured satin on the bed, with its white spread; there were roses on the washstand ware, a rose-coloured carpet, and the most inviting-looking chair, all upholstered in cretonne to harmonise. The girl stood there, lovingly noting every touch about the scheme, when suddenly she was aware that a man stood at her elbow, and turned to confront Peter.

He raised his hat and the colour swept to her face. Would he think she had delayed in this conspicuous place opposite the drapery establishment on purpose? Pride and her woman's wit came to her aid.

"Isn't this pretty?" She made her voice sound quite gay and careless. "It's the very colour scheme I've planned for years, ever since I was engaged. I wish my *fiancé* could see it. He prefers such serviceable things."

Then, remembering that she had not yet thanked Peter for the ointment, her voice softened.

"Oh, Mr. Wagerfield," she said, "thank you so much for your kindness. That ointment is simply splendid; already my chilblains are getting better. Your mother must be a clever woman. I—I," but there she paused. "I should like to write and thank her," she added. "You see, my hands get so bad every winter, and the shop is so cold."

"That it is," agreed Peter. "Worse than any church. I don't get chilblains on my hands, thank goodness. Get 'em on my feet instead," he added ruefully.

"Oh!" she cried, all aghast at her own selfishness, "and I've taken your ointment!"

"Bless you, Miss Miggs," he rejoined, smiling, "I've got plenty. Mother always sees to that. She's wonderful, is mother, over these old-world cures. But if you'd really write and tell her that the ointment has done your hands good it'd please her no end," he added shyly. "She's a dear, is mother; lives down in the country, in Buckinghamshire, and potters about, bless her, as happy as the day is long, especially if she's got some old recipe to make up from things that grow in the garden or in the fields round about."

"Do let me have her address," cried Mary gratefully. "I shall love to write and thank her."

So that was how it chanced that little Mrs. Wagerfield, in her cottage on the Chilterns, received a letter in a handwriting she did not know, and, putting on her glasses, read Mary's note of thanks with a warm glow at her heart.

"Dear me," she sighed, "quite the little lady she sounds, judging by her letter. Bless me, and she says she used to live in Buckinghamshire, herself, till her people died. I daresay she's in nasty lodgings, too, like my poor Peter."

That was why a certain home-baked loaf and a delicious "lardie-cake" found its way to Mary's lodging; that was why Mary wrote again, this time a longer letter of thanks, and lo and behold! before either knew it, Mary and Peter's mother had become quite friendly and confidential with each other.

"You must get Peter to bring you down one Sunday when the primroses are out," wrote the old lady. "It isn't far and you can catch the early train."

And as she penned that message little Mrs. Wagerfield smiled.

"I'm so glad Peter has found a nice girl, a real lady," she said. "I wonder when the dear boy will tell me. I was always so afraid one of those pert shop-girls would catch him, and he so particular, too."

You see, she didn't know Mary was also employed at Messrs. Jinkins Bros. establishment.

It is true his mother said nothing to Peter; she was too wise to try to force confidences, but at the same time Peter was not particularly happy just then. The days had begun to lengthen a little, the harsh, nipping winds were here still, it is true, but the frosts had gone, and with the frosts Mary's chilblains. But he was not sorry for that. Mary and he were quite good friends now; they often walked part of the way homewards together, but Peter had never forgotten one thing.

Mary was engaged.

Mary had a *fiancé*, and spoke of him quite openly. Peter knew he hated that young man, whoever he might be. In his heart, too, he despised him, thinking of him as a stodgy, uninteresting sort of a creature with a taste for the severely plain and useful, and with no ideas on furnishing at all.

For Mary and he often stood and looked

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The girl stood there, lovingly noting every touch about the scheme, when suddenly she was aware that a man stood at her elbow, and turned to confront Peter. . . . "Isn't this pretty?" She made her voice sound quite gay and careless. "It's the very colour scheme I've planned for years."

in at Ball & Co.'s windows, and it was simply astonishing to discover how many tastes they had in common over furniture alone. The rose and white scheme, for instance, pleased him immensely, and when Mary confided to him her ideas about soft pewter-grey and

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mauve he even took the trouble to discover a famous shop in Regent Street where such a scheme was displayed and persuaded her to accompany him one Saturday afternoon, just for the joy of seeing her eyes light up.

"Of course, it could be copied in less expensive materials," he said, for all the world as though they were planning such a room together. "The main idea would be the same. Look at that wistaria panel, now; it could be done in lovely cretonne, I'll be bound."

It was just then he remembered Mary's *fiancé*, and pulled himself up quickly with a sigh. If only—there he paused.

It was just then, too, Mary remembered that young men put small value on girls who try to "catch" them.

"I'm afraid my *fiancé* wouldn't like mauve," she murmured. "He prefers dark, serviceable shades."

Peter Wagerfield walked back to his lodgings in a very disagreeable temper.

Looking at furniture and planning colour schemes evidently did not agree with him. As a matter of fact, all this, combined with the hint of spring in the air, had set Peter's thoughts a-winging, and he began to think he would really like to have a little home of his own. It could only be a small one, rather humble, whilst he was still only an assistant in "calico," as he contemptuously dubbed the "Manchester Goods" department, but there were a hundred pounds in the bank, left him by his father; he had saved, as well, and there was no reason why the little home shouldn't be really artistic.

But there! What was the use? He knew now he wanted Mary in it. And Mary had a *fiancé!*

On the way he stopped to buy a paper, a simple and very trivial fact, maybe, but one having such an influence on Peter's future I am bound to record it here.

The paper had a column headed "Friendship," and, reading this through, Peter was amazed to find it was a kind of intermediary between young men and women who wished to make friends. Not, apparently, with a view to matrimony, oh, dear! no; there were lonely folk of both sexes and of all ages who wanted "friendship, cheery letters, exchange of opinions on Art, Music, and Literature and the like," and whose letters need not even be signed by their names, but if a *nom de plume* were chosen, and stamps enclosed for postage, would be sent on by the bureau.

Peter Wagerfield made up his mind to write that very evening, determined to ask for a correspondent.

He did so, choosing the *nom de plume* "Blighted Bachelor."

In the course of a week or so a reply arrived for him signed "Lonely Lady," the handwriting singularly neat and refined, its owner stating that she had seen "Blighted Bachelor's" appeal, was sorry for him, and would like to correspond. Then followed a short description of her tastes; he found that she was fond of reading and that she loved gardening, but unluckily, being forced by circumstances to earn her living in London, a garden and its pleasures were denied her.

"Blighted Bachelor" wrote back the same evening that he received this missive, and then began a regular and most interesting correspondence, until Peter amongst his calicoes found himself sometimes almost light-hearted, and would find himself smiling to himself at some whimsical sentence "Lonely Lady" had penned. For she had a quaint style of her own, was possessed of a quiet humour, and could even make and share a joke. Peter found himself looking forward quite eagerly to her letters, treasuring each one and reading them over and over again. He tied them up with mauve ribbon, but it was not till the paper friendship was some months old that he realised what he had done, and blushed in the privacy of his own bedroom.

"I wonder if she likes mauve and grey," he soliloquised.

He threw out a feeler in the next letter, turning the subject adroitly to decorative schemes and colourings.

Peter found she *did* like mauve and grey; in fact, the number of dainty little touches she suggested convinced him that Mary Miggs wasn't the only artistic girl in the world.

From that moment the friendship on paper grew and strengthened until a wonderful and wholly unexpected thing happened—Peter Wagerfield had five hundred pounds left him by an uncle, together with a small house, a few acres of land—freehold, too—and the whole of the furniture and effects.

The lawyer's letter conveying the news hinted that the latter might be worth a nice little sum if sold. Peter did not know what was meant by "effects," and rubbed his head reflectively. But he did know one thing, and was certain about it now; he was going to meet "Lonely Lady" in the flesh, and if she was anything like her letters, if she was half as nice, in fact, Peter had made up his mind what he would do.

Together they would plan that pewter-grey and mauve room, together they would design the dainty rose and white bedroom.

Good gracious! What was the matter with him? He found himself thinking, actually with a sigh, of the girl who had first

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of all drawn his attention to furniture and furnishings. How stupid! What was the use? Mary Miggs was engaged.

The letter was written, the appointment made, and all that week, among his calico and longcloth, Peter felt himself older, firmer, more sure of himself, and yet at the same time curiously sad. It was not that he regretted giving up the calico—for already he had given in his resignation to Messrs. Jinkins Bros.—but a sigh escaped him as he remembered he would probably never see Miss Miggs again. He hated the calico, hated the coarse odour of the goods he handled, hated the shop, the polite shop-walker, the urbane proprietors, and the hateful code of rules, and yet—Peter knew there was something about this shop he would never forget if he lived to be a hundred. It was here, among the brown and grey calico that seeds of romance had been planted in his heart.

Regardless of everything, he took her in his arms. . . . "Look here," and his voice rang jubilant, "you've got to marry me."

[Page 206, col. 1.]

The evening set apart for the meeting arrived at last; Peter had fixed on the vestibule of a small restaurant he knew, and it was arranged that, since neither knew what the other was like, he should wear a mauve flower in his buttonhole, and she should be dressed in grey. Peter drew himself up smartly. Heavens! He *was* growing sentimental.

As he stuck a small spray of mauve Michaelmas daisy in the buttonhole of his grey suit he smiled at himself in the glass.

"Suppose she's a little, faded, old woman," he said; but somehow Peter felt sure she was young, a little gay, since her letters spoke of lightness of heart in spite of the loneliness, and possibly, although this did not matter very much, she might be rather pretty, too.

His heart beat rather faster than usual as he entered the vestibule of the restaurant; the next instant he dropped his stick with a clatter. What a coincidence!

There was one lady seated facing the door, and she was dressed in pewter-grey. But it was Mary

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Miggs! He was so taken aback that for a second he could say or do nothing, then the significance of something else about her attire reached him. Round her neat grey straw hat was a wreath of wistaria.

She, too, stared at him, and her pale face grew very white; then as suddenly a wave of warm colour swept over it.

"You!" she gasped. "You!"

Then he knew, and strode forward.

"So you are 'Lonely Lady?'" he demanded, but there was joy in his voice.

"Ye-es," she faltered. "Oh! Oh! Do you mean to say you are 'Blighted Bachelor?'"

For once in his life Peter rose to the occasion. Regardless of everything he took her in his arms.

"I was," he said; "but I'm blest if I'm going to be one any longer. You've got to chuck that young man of yours now, Mary. Hang him! You know he isn't suited to you. Look here," and his voice rang jubilant, "you've got to marry me."

"I—I haven't got a young man," said Mary in a very small voice. "I've never had one."

Peter stared at her.

"But you said——" he began.

But Mary was getting back her self-possession.

"I know," she said in a very demure voice, "but, you see, Peter, I wasn't going to have you think I was chucking myself at you."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Peter in awed tones, "do you mean to say——?" There he paused, looked at her, laughed, then tucked her arm under his in masterful fashion. "Well, I'm blest!" he cried, "and you've been making me miserable all these months for nothing. Come along in. We'll settle things over dinner."

But it was quite a long time afterwards before Mary dared to ask a question she had been longing to put for some time.

"Peter," she said, "what did you mean by saying I'd made you miserable?"

"It's true," he said. "I fell in love with you right from the start—ever since," he paused, and his voice grew slightly shy—"ever since I saw you looking at furniture that night outside Ball's."

Mary was blushing divinely now.

"So did I," she confessed.

Peter hesitated, looked round; they were the only two left in the room, other diners had left, and the solitary waiter had his back turned discreetly. Peter kissed her.

THE CUT O' THE JIB.

"Did ever 'ee see such a skinny-go-lean?" sez old Bob Lobb to me,
Lookin' at Peter Rowe go down, makin' away to sea.
"He'm thin as a rake, an' no mistake,
'Tis lucky I bain't like he."

"Did ever 'ee see such a blubbery lump?" sez Peter Rowe to me,
Pointin' across at old Bob Lobb, lazin' along the quay.
"He'm round as a sack in front an' back,
What a terrible sight to be!"

"Did ever 'ee see such a funny old pair?" sez I to myself an' me,
Look'n' at Peter Rowe an' Bob, arguin' on the quay.
"An' both be quite so sure they'm right
As ever a man can be."

But after they'd argued about a bit they came along the quay,
An' asked me to settle 'em which was best. An' I looked at 'em both to see,
An' I sez in the ear of each: "My dear,
'Tis best to be as you be"

Away they went, an' quite content, for all they didn't agree,
An' laughed an' chaffed each other again, down along the quay.
But I reckon for sure they'd like it more
If they was made proper, like me.

Bernard Moore.

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Please Help the Kiddies!

Photo *Fradham & Banfield.*

Miss Gladys Cooper, who is appealing for the Fresh Air Fund, and her little son, John.

Miss Gladys Cooper, the beautiful young actress who in private life is Mrs. Herbert Buckmaster and the mother of two charming children, Joan and John, has very kindly consented to appeal this year in the ROYAL on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund—the children's charity. It exists, as most readers of the ROYAL know, to send City children to the country in summer time. Fifteen pence pays for a day's holiday for one child, and fifteen shillings sends a child to the country for a fortnight. All working expenses are borne by the promoters, and the whole of the money subscribed directly benefits the children. Please send subscriptions to the Hon. Sec F.A.F., care of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C. 2.

—[Ed. R.M.]

I've just come back from the seaside—yes, I still have a cottage on the East coast, Zeppelins notwithstanding!—and London seems very hot and stifling after my brief week-end of sea breezes and fresh air.

"Thank goodness I left my kiddies down at the seaside!" I said to myself, for even Regent's Park itself looked parched, and the geraniums in the window-boxes were drooping in the heat. And that set me thinking of other kiddies, the poor little souls who are cooped up in airless rooms and have no playground except the sun scorched, dusty streets.

Even for those of us who live in what the house agents describe as "attractive localities" and can afford an occasional week-end out of it, London is pretty trying in the summer months. And don't those week-ends make a difference! They do to me, and that is why I am going to ask you to help me give as many poor children as possible, if not a week-end, at least a day in the country.

Doesn't it seem a pity that the woods and fields should be there waiting for the feet of little people, the hedges full of flowers asking to be picked—and the children unable to reach them?

"I wish you had a magic carpet, mother," said Joan, my little daughter, when I was talking to her about the Fresh Air Fund, and devoutly I echo her wish. But I want you to make up for the absence of a magic carpet, and you can do it, all of you who can spare fifteen pence, the sum that wafts a child into the country for a day.

A day is soon over, you say? Yes, but the memory of it will live all through the summer, and the streets will seem a little less dingy, the tenement rooms a little less sultry, because of that one day among the sunshine and butterflies.

You know how the memory of a happy holiday helps you through the summer, with what pleasure you look back on picnics and country rambles! It's the same with the kiddies. They'll remember that day under the blue skies long after it is past, and will weave happy little dreams about the fairy kingdom in which they found themselves.

If you have a very full purse and can spare fifteen shillings you can give some ailing child the freedom of fairyland for a whole fortnight. That's worth doing, isn't it? I know you'd like to think when you go on your own summer holiday that some poor kiddie, once weak and pale from lack of fresh air and good food, was now rosy-cheeked and lusty because you cared enough to help.

The men in the trenches, the men on our fighting ships, busy as they are with the manifold duties of war, always find time to remember the little ones. They give right royally, and I know you'll do the same.

There are so many grey days in the life of a poor city child; won't you make one of them golden?

I feel sure you will!

Gladys Cooper

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The July

CAP AND BELLS

THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

VICAR'S DAUGHTER: "I suppose the rain kept you away from the funeral on Tuesday, Mrs. Blogg?"

MRS. BLOGG: "Well, partly, miss; but to speak true, wot with the rheumatiz and doin' away with the 'am and cake afterwards, funerals ain't the jaunts they used to be for me."

HIS GUARDIAN ANGEL.

"Well, how do you think you'll go on?" said the Sergeant to a recruit in the police force, who had been told off for night duty.

"Oh, I'll be all right!" he said. "My mother's coming round with me for the first night or two."

RIDICULOUS CREATURE!

MRS. SNOOPER: "Men are annoying!"

MRS. SWAYBACK: "What's the matter now?"

MRS. SNOOPER: "My husband saw Mrs. Keedick yesterday, and I asked him what she had on, and he replied, 'Oh, clothes!'"

A GOOD ALL ROUND STOCK.

TOURIST (in village general-shop): "What have you got in the shape of motor-car tyres?"

SALESWOMAN: "Funeral wreaths, life-preservers, invalid cushions, and doughnuts."

THE COLONEL'S WIFE.

The Adjutant likes his game of cards,
So he comes home at two;
The Subs come home at any old time—
As Subs are wont to do.
Yes, they like to come home with the morning milk
And swank about seeing life;
But the Colonel comes home at half-past ten,
Because of the Colonel's wife.
Oh, yes!
Because of the Colonel's wife.

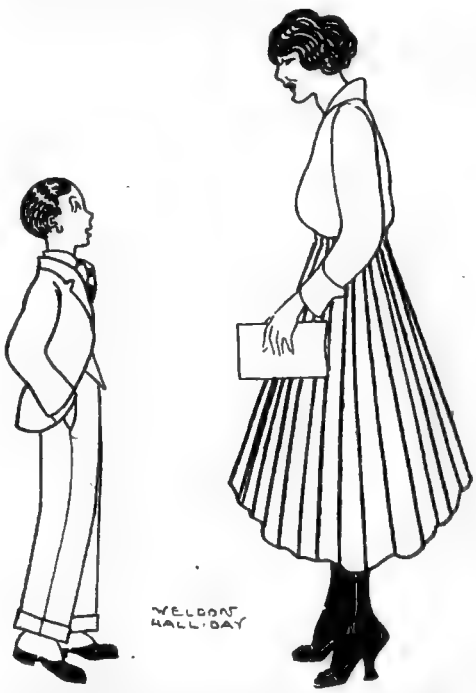
The Adjutant bosses the Captain,
The Captain bosses the Sub;
The Colonel can make the Adjutant wince
With a well-directed snub.
But the Colonel is really a peaceable man
Who shrinks from domestic strife;
So we know who bosses the Colonel,
And that is the Colonel's wife.
Cheero!
We billet the Colonel's wife.

T. O'Meara.

A GENTLEMAN TO THE LAST.

MOTHER: "Oh, Bobby, you naughty boy, you've been smoking!" (Pause.) "Poor darling, do you feel very bad?"

BOBBY (who has been well brought up): "Thank you; I think I'm dying."



THE ONLY MAN LEFT: "I say, look here, Miss Smith, if I take you to the theatre you won't mention it to the other girls in the office, will you? They'd be so frightfully jealous."

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DODGING SHELLS BY NUMBERS.

1. Private Sloper has just persuaded his comrades to practise dodging shells by numbers, when——

2.——a shell bursts in their midst, anticipating events by several seconds, whereupon——

3.——Private Sloper, fearing reprisals for bad stage management of the affair, ignores the advent of the shell and makes bland inquiry: "Who threw that brick?"

VERY APT.

The teacher was giving a geography lesson to the class.

"Now," said she, "we come to Germany, the country governed by the Kaiser. Tommy Jones, what is a Kaiser?"

"Please'm," replied Tommy Jones, 'a stream o' hot water springin' up an' disturbin' the earth!"

FINIS.

"Fancy old Bill, of all people, going into the gunpowder shed with a lighted candle!" remarked the proprietor of an explosives factory to his foreman. "I should have thought that would be the last thing he'd do."

"Which properly speakin', it were, sir!" responded the foreman.

COLD, BUT COURTEOUS.

The old four-wheeler was rolling gently along the suburban road, the grey-whiskered driver lost in thought.

Suddenly, at a corner, a tradesman's cart came dashing along. The two horses collided at right angles with just enough force to drive the head of the horse in the trap-shafts over the back of the cab-horse.

The onlookers gathered round, expecting to hear that flow of language for which cabmen are supposed to be famous.

But no! The old man settled himself in his seat and said politely:

"When your 'oss 'as seen all 'e wants to over my 'oss's back, perhaps 'e'll get down. But, bless yer, there ain't no 'urry!"

HARD AS NAILS.

Playing about one day, a blue-jacket aboard one of our cruisers accidentally ripped up the back of his shipmate's jumper.

"'Ow am I goin' to mend that, and the bugle goin' for divisions in three minutes?" demanded the victim.

"I'll do it in two two's. Turn round," said his mate.

Without troubling his chum to remove his jumper, the seaman quickly sewed up the rent in time for both to fall in at the call.

As they were going to bed that night the tar with the repaired jumper, after struggling in vain for some minutes to get out of it, yelled wrathfully:

"You bunglin' ass! You've sewed it to my skin!"

A SUMMER SHOWER.

He had returned from his seventeen days' holiday, and bounced into the office as if he panted for work.

"Had a good time?" asked his fellow-clerk.

"Yes, great!" he replied.

"What sort of weather did you get?"

"Oh, pretty good. Only a couple of showers!"

"What; only a couple of showers!"

"Yes, the first lasted ten days, and the second six."

SUB (just out from Blighty): "Are they very close under us?"
OLD HAND: "Yessir. Hear 'em pickin'?"
SUB: "Picking what?"
OLD HAND: "Pickin' their teeth, sir."

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A DRASTIC REMEDY.

She was a fair-haired lady, an actress by profession, and dainty withal. Her headgear consisted of a bowl-like foundation, from which protruded plumes mounted on slender wires. She sauntered into a theatre, and took her seat to witness the great play, *Ashamed of Her Brother*.

There was a touch on her hat. Loftily and haughtily she turned.

"Does my hat annoy you?" she asked.

"Not at all," replied the person behind her.

The footlight favourite thought for a time. She feared she had been ungracious, and, like Dick Whittington, she turned again.

"Perhaps my plumes interfere with your view?" she suggested more amiably.

"Oh, no, thank you," replied the self-possessed young woman; "I've bent 'em back."

UP AND DOWN.

Said Smith, in confidential tones,
To Henry Brown one day:
"It's time you settled down, old chap,
And married straight away."

"Perhaps you do not understand,"
Replied the worried Brown,
"I've got so much to settle up,
I cannot settle down."

Dorothy Harrison.

A DILEMMA.

NELL: "Oh, dear, I'm in such a quandary."

BELL: "What is it?"

NELL: "Jack promises to stop drinking if I marry him and Tom threatens to begin if I don't."

TRAMP: "No, you musn't think I'm down on work, 'cos I ain't. If it wasn't for work, 'ow would all these people git money to give us?"

AN EFFECT ON THE FIGURE.

MERCHANT: "What's the matter with your figures this morning—new pen?"

BOOK-KEEPER: "No, sir."

"New ink?"

"No, sir."

"What then?"

"Neuralgia."

THE HAND OF AN EXPERT.

LADY: "What are you crying for, my little man?"

BOBBY: "My father has bin beatin' me."

LADY: "Well, don't cry. All fathers have to beat their boys sometimes."

BOBBY: "But my fa-father isn't like other fa fathers. He's in a brass band and bea-beats the big drum."

A BOASTFUL SPIRIT.

"William," the teacher asked, "can you tell me anything about Christopher Columbus?"

"He discovered America."

"Yes. What else did he do?"

"I s'pose he went home and lectured and swanked about it."

NOTHING OF VALUE.

FIRST TRAWLER SKIPPER (to friend who is due to sail by next tide): "Are ye takin' any precautions against these submarines, Jock?"

SECOND SKIPPER: "Ay, although I've been in the habit o' carryin' ma money wi' me, I went an' bankit it this morning, an' I'm not takin' ma best oilskins or ma new sea boots."

FIRST SKIPPER: "Oh, you're a' richt, then, Ye'll hae practically naethin' tae lose but yer life."

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HUMANITY.

FATHER: "I told you to give that worm to the chickens, Gerald, not to be cruel to it."

ONLY FANCY!

Nancy, at the age of eight,
Asked me plainly if I would,
At some vaguely distant date,
Marry her if she were good?
I was thirteen, I remember, and, with scorn
I scarcely hid,
Then to Nancy—only fancy!—
Answered: "No, you silly kid."

And when I, as you shall learn,
Ten years later, more or less,
Put the question in my turn,
Feeling sure she'd answer "Yes,"
Not the answer I expected did she stammer
forth with joy,
But Miss Nancy—only fancy!—
Answered: "No, you silly boy."

Ada Leonora Harris.

THE LAST STRAW.

Mary Jane's master is a slightly eccentric bachelor. He has one most irritating habit. Instead of telling her what he wants done by word of mouth he leaves on his desk, or anywhere else where she is likely to see it, a note curtly directing her to "Dust the dining-room," or "Clear up my study," and so on.

The other day he bought some notepaper, with the usual die-sunk address on it, from the stationer, and ordered it to be sent home. Mary Jane took it in, and the first thing she saw was a note attached to the package. She read it open-eyed.

"Well!" she said. "He's asked me to do a few things in his blessed notes, but this is the limit. I won't stand it no longer!"

For the note read: "Die inside this package."

UNPARDONABLE!

"More tough luck," whispered his wife.

"Well, what now?" he muttered.

"You know Miss Green never sings without her music?"

"Yes."

"Well, she's brought her music."

PEACE AT ANY PRICE.

During the summer in one corner of a railway carriage sat a very little girl in charge of a nurse. The mother sat opposite, behind an illustrated paper. Suddenly there were wriggles and peevish cries, and a voice from behind the paper said:

"Give it to her, nurse."

Still the crying went on, and again from behind the paper came the injunction:

"Oh, do let her have it, nurse; it's no use letting the child cry."

Suddenly the cries rose into a howl, and the mother, appearing from behind the paper, said indignantly:

"Why don't you do as I tell you, nurse? Let her have it at once!"

"She's got it, madam. It's a wasp!"

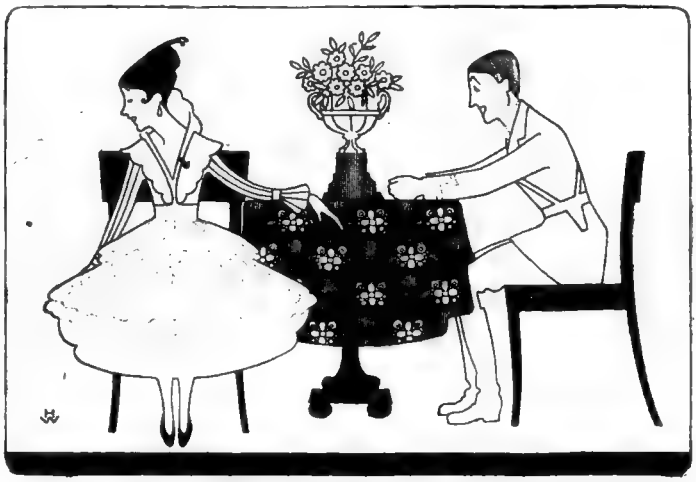
AND THAT'S THAT!

WOULD-BE PASSENGER (out of breath from running): "When does the half-past five train leave?"

PORTER: "Five-thirty."

PASSENGER: "Well, the church clock is twenty-seven minutes past, the post-office clock is twenty-five minutes past, and your clock is thirty-two minutes. Now, which clock am I to go by?"

PORTER: "Yer can go by any clock yer like, but yer can't go by the train, for it's gone."



SWEET YOUNG THING: "And when did you first begin to love me, Percy?"

AMOROUS SUB.: "The day you left your bag at home, darling, and powdered your nose with a piece of Turkish delight"

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A DRAMA of the NIGHT

By Claude Grahame-White and Harry Harper.

"Whoe'er amidst the sons
Of reason, valour, liberty and virtue,
Displays distinguished merit, is a noble
Of nature's own creating."

I.

Henshaw, of the Admiralty Intelligence Department, heard a ring at the door of his flat, and the next moment his man brought him a sealed note. He opened it and read slowly the cypher it contained. Then he wrote a word or two at the bottom of the slip, inclosed it in an envelope, dropped some wax on the flap, and stamped it with his special seal. His man took out the reply to the door, and the messenger hastened away.

After an idle morning and a good lunch, Henshaw took a taxi to Waterloo Station and made his way into the upstairs tea-room. Here, awaiting him at a quiet table, he found Akehurst, his Chief. The contrast between the two men was striking. Akehurst was thin, drawn, restless-eyed. Henshaw, blond, broad-shouldered, quiet-moving, seemed as though he had no nerves.

Akehurst sipped his tea. Then he asked Henshaw abruptly:

"You learnt to fly the year before last, didn't you? Was it a biplane or monoplane?"

"I went through a biplane course at Hendon," was the answer. "And I've done a fair amount of cross-country flying since."

"Have you flown at night?"

"Yes, a number of times."

"Then listen," said Akehurst, clearing a space on the table for some notes he took from his pocket. "Soon after the beginning of the war the Germans, realising that we could reach their air-stations at Düsseldorf and Cologne with our bomb-dropping aeroplanes, established a big factory and testing-plant up in Schleswig-Holstein. This place has been growing very rapidly, and is now an immense centre of activity. They're building most of the big twin-engined biplanes there, as well as the new single-seated machines with the 150-h.p. and 200-h.p. motors."

While Akehurst paused for a moment to sort his notes, Henshaw said:

"We, I take it, want to use our new multi-engined machines in raiding this German factory?"

Akehurst nodded.

"But the difficulty is," he explained, "that we can't mark on our maps the exact position of this air-station. The place is not far inland; that we know. If we could fix definitely where these buildings are, it would be possible to assemble an offensive squadron—seaplane carriers, cruisers, torpedo-destroyers, and submarines—and arrive before dawn one morning off the Schleswig coast. Then the seaplanes would be lowered from their parent ships, and would rise from the surface of the water and fly inland, knocking these factories about pretty severely. But we can't act on haphazard information. Our aviators must know just where to fly."

Henshaw smiled slowly, taking a cigarette from his case.

"Not another scramble into Germany for me, is it?" he asked in mock resignation. "I know that, for my sins, I look rather like one of them, and that I can talk their language fluently. But the pitcher may go too often to the well. I can't keep on doing it."

"Yet," said Akehurst quietly, "it's to the Johannisthal aerodrome, near Berlin, that I'm asking you to go; and not only to the aerodrome, but also into the Service restaurant you'll find not far from the sheds."

"Tell me the worst," pleaded Henshaw, with an affectation of intolerable suspense.

"On the Western front, a little while ago," said Akehurst, "one of the newest type German biplanes, a single-seater built for speed, came into our possession undamaged. We've several specimens of the identification papers carried by German aviators. And we've quite a convincing assortment of their flying equipment. We know also what the signal is—made with coloured lights from a rocket pistol—when a German aviator is about to descend at night at one of their military aerodromes."

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A smile appeared on Henshaw's face—a smile of interest and appreciation.

"I see," he said. "Quite a notion But——"

Akehurst commanded silence with a wave of the hand.

"This biplane is ready on the East Coast; they're fitting it with a larger tank, to make certain you've enough fuel. A set of imitation papers is being prepared, and you'll have a complete German flying kit. And there'll be the pistol for you, and the right number of lights, when you reach Johannisthal. All you've to do is to go to the air-station where the machine is, get used to it in flight, and then wait for the right weather. You'll want it fairly calm, I'm told, and with some clouds, if possible. It's awkward—from the point of view of launching you from the ship that will take you off the German coast—that the machine is a land craft, and not a seaplane. But if it were a seaplane you would not be able to alight at Johannisthal. The Naval people will have to fit you a launching-platform on one of the seaplane-carriers. And when you fly back—well, you'll make as neat a contact with the water as you can, and abandon your machine as you're picked up."

"Just a moment," said Henshaw. "I——"

But Akehurst waved his hand again.

"There'll be a squadron to escort you to the nearest possible point off the enemy coast. Then you'll fly according to map and compass, and the land lights, in the direction of Berlin. When you arrive over Johannisthal, you'll fire your pistol signals and descend. They'll have lights on the ground to guide you. Then, when the officer of the guard comes up, you've got to tell your tale. You're from some neighbouring aerodrome; you've been testing your ability to fly at night, and you've lost your way and found yourself above Johannisthal. You're cold and tired, and want something to eat in the restaurant before you grope your way back. That's one idea; perhaps you may be able to improve on it?

"Anyhow, you go to the restaurant; you have your meal; you find out, by suitable conversation, where this big constructional depôt is in Schleswig, and then you get to your machine as quickly as you can and fly off back. The surface ships of your escort will be gone, but there'll be a submarine on the look-out for you off the coast. You'll fly high as you come over the water, and fire signals with your rocket pistol as you descend. The submarine will come up and take you off. Naturally there are risks."

"There are," said Henshaw. "The scheme's honeycombed with them. But its' a good one all the same, and, of course, I'm on."

II.

The small squadron had been cruising on the German side of the North Sea, waiting for twilight to deepen into dusk. Then, moving under cover of the growing darkness, they threaded the minefield south of Heligoland, and pushed in shoreward near Cuxhaven. It was a dark night; the breeze was light; there were clouds here and there at a fair altitude.

Henshaw stood on the bridge of the seaplane-carrier beside its Commander.

"We're taking you in as near as we dare," said the latter. "When you ascend, you'll lay your course E.S.E. This machine of yours should do a fraction over 100 miles an hour. Your trip from the coast to Berlin is about 225 miles—a flight of a little more than two hours. There's a north set in the breeze, and you'll have to make an allowance for leeway; but then, of course, you'll see lights and towns."

Henshaw nodded. He was muffled up already in his flying garb. Then he and the Commander went from the bridge towards the bow of the vessel. Here, at the end of a gangway, stood the biplane Henshaw was to use. Its six-cylinder motor, dominating the hull, gave it a pugnacious, over-developed look—like that of some excessively-muscled athlete.

Henshaw climbed into his seat within the tubular hull. He switched on several small electric lights which cast a gleam on the dashboard in front of him, where his instruments were fixed. A word or so more, a look to see that his map was right; then he called out the word "Contact!" and switched on his ignition. A moment later the big motor broke into its guttural roar.

Henshaw listened for a second or so to the rhythm of his engine. Then he opened the throttle, threw up an arm as the signal that the craft should be released, and a moment later was in the air. There was nothing ahead but darkness, so he did not look out from behind his wind-screen. All he wanted to know for the moment could be learned from inside his little cockpit. An inclinometer told him the angle his machine was assuming as it ascended. A gauge registered his speed in relation to the air. A dial showed how many revolutions a minute his engine was making; while the needle of the height-recorder indicated in feet the rate of his ascent as he left the sea below. So Henshaw drove upward into the darkness.

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Soon he had reached an altitude of several thousand feet. Then he brought his craft round accurately on its compass course. Below, when he glanced over into the rush of wind, nothing could be seen distinctly in the grey-black obscurity. He was alone above sea and earth, his life depending on the motor which droned away in front of him.

Henshaw was concerned for a time, as he passed inland, with gaining altitude. Then, at ten thousand feet, he settled down to his long flight. He did not feel that the time dragged. There was much for him to do in his electrically-lit cockpit, or, rather, much to see. His eyes roved constantly from the needle of one dial to the needle of another, and he pumped occasionally to maintain pressure in his supplementary petrol supply tank.

Primarily, of course, he was busy with his compass, steering as accurate a course as skill would permit. Points here and there he recognised on the dark, enemy land below; occasionally there were the lights of big towns. Luckily, there was no ground mist, nor did the slight set of the wind from the north cause him to make any appreciable leeway.

Presently, away ahead of him and a little to the north, Henshaw saw a heavy, yellow-white haze. He looked at it shrewdly for a time. Then—noting from the clock on his dashboard the length of time he had been in the air—he felt convinced, and altered his course slightly.

"Berlin it is," he whispered to himself.

He held on steadily, and before long—being well acquainted with the topography of Berlin—he was able to distinguish, on the carpet of light that now lay spread before him, certain points which enabled him to fix his bearings.

"It's a blessing," he murmured, "that they've had no occasion yet to dim their lights."

He got his course for Johannisthal, aided by the ray of a searchlight. He had been descending steadily as he neared his goal, and now he reached down beside his seat and took out the signal-pistol. Slowing his machine a little by a movement of the throttle lever, he stretched out a hand into the wind and fired his signals quickly. Then, turning his craft in a circle, he repeated them.

Now the searchlight found him, throwing an inquiring beam on his machine. Then it moved off considerately, so as not to dazzle him with its radiance, and the next moment, neatly outlined below, there sprang into view the system of electric ground signs which guide aviators on their landings from night flights.

For the next minute or so, engrossed by the technique of his descent, Henshaw forgot that he was alighting as a spy in an enemy aerodrome, and that death quite probably awaited him, should he be detected. Fixing his gaze on the ground lights, he saw them coming nearer and nearer. Then at last, so far as he could judge, came the crucial moment. He brought up the front of his machine and "flattened out." If his judgment of distance had been right, all would be well; if not, he might descend so heavily as to crush one or both of his running-wheels, and perhaps break a strut as well.

He waited for a long-drawn moment; the ground immediately below him he could no longer see. Then came the impact; it was by no means light. In the daytime such a descent would have been considered clumsy. But Henshaw sighed with relief. He could tell from the way the machine moved across the ground that no damage had been done, and that his craft would be in trim for a quick ascent.

III.

The German Lieutenant who was in charge of the aerodrome was very bored that night, and it was his non-commissioned officer, a man dull-witted but conscientious, who had called his attention to the signal-rockets aloft. Whereupon the Lieutenant, pleased at any break in the monotony of his night watch, superintended personally the lighting of the ground lights; after which he walked over with his men to the place where the descending machine had come to rest—a spot indicated quickly by the beam of the searchlight.

Henshaw, springing from his craft, had thrown off his thick outer clothing, so as to be free to run at his best speed, should he need to get back quickly to his machine. And into each of the side pockets of his coat he had slipped an automatic pistol.

The light borne by the non-commissioned officer revealed Henshaw standing by his machine—a machine that declared its German origin plainly. And Henshaw was quick, yet not too quick, to give a favourable impression. He addressed the Lieutenant punctiliously. Then, while diving in his pockets for his forged identification papers, he embarked in a tone of assumed annoyance on an account of the speed of his machine—which he gave his hearers to understand had practically run away with him—and also cursed the folly of superior officers at Bittenfeld, who insisted on their pilots practising, with such fast craft, the troublesome art of night flying.

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The light borne by the non-commissioned officer revealed Henshaw standing by his machine—a machine that declared its German origin plainly. . . . While diving in his pockets for his forged identification papers, he embarked in a tone of assumed annoyance on an account of the speed of his machine.

"It's lucky," he confessed, while the Lieutenant looked perfunctorily over his papers, "that one can see from such a distance the lights of Berlin. Otherwise I should have been wandering about till my petrol gave out, and then it would have been a crash on landing."

The Lieutenant nodded sympathetically. The incident was helping to pass the time.

"What will you do?" he asked. "Shall we telephone Bittenfeld?"

"It's unnecessary," said Henshaw in his perfect German. "I'm cold and hungry. I propose to have a plate of soup in your all-night restaurant. Then, getting my compass course accurately, I shall start out again and be at Bittenfeld before they think of making any inquiry. So please don't put yourself to any inconvenience. Perhaps you would care to join me in the restaurant? This night work is cheerless."

The Lieutenant brightened visibly; the idea was excellent. With a word to his non-commissioned officer, and leaving two men to guard the aeroplane — an arrangement which Henshaw thought might, under certain circumstances, prove very inconvenient— the Lieutenant walked off with him to where lights showed discreetly from the windows of the aerodrome restaurant.

The non-commissioned officer grunted as he saw the two walk away. Here was his officer preparing to drink soup while he had to go back into the entrance of a draughty shed! He decided he would fill in the interval, before the reappearance of the two from the restaurant, by himself putting through a telephone call to Bittenfeld, and reporting to the guard there the arrival at Johannisthal of their straying machine. In doing so he was acting according to the regulations, and, as has been said, he was a conscientious man.

Meanwhile the Lieutenant and his companion had entered the restaurant. There were only a few men sitting about the big room. Henshaw ran his eye over them rapidly, and saw they were petty officers belonging to the ground organisation of the aerodrome.

Henshaw and the Lieutenant sat down at a little table, and Henshaw began to talk skilfully round his subject. He did not want to waste time. Every minute meant risk for him, he knew.

He soon found that his companion was an enthusiastic motorist. So he embarked at once on an account of his own motoring exploits, and thence passed on to discuss long drives. This gave him the chance to

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introduce casually the information that a great friend of his, an engineer, had recently entered the aircraft service, after a period spent with the motor transport on the western front.

"When I get leave I'm going to drive out to see this fellow," he explained. "But I find I've mislaid somehow the last letter he sent me. He's been moved up into Schleswig somewhere, I know—to that new station where they're building so many of the twin-engined battleplanes. I've a rough idea how to get there, and that's all."

The Lieutenant, who was drinking his soup with relish, fell very readily into the trap. He called an order across the café, and one of the non-commissioned officers left his game of cards and, coming forward, saluted and stood at attention.

"What's the name of the new place up in Schleswig?" The Lieutenant fired the question at him casually.

"Grondern, Herr Leutnant," was the prompt answer.

Now Henshaw thought he might venture a question.

"What's the lie of the land thereabouts?" he asked. "I don't want to lose my way."

The non-commissioned officer turned towards him with automatic politeness.

"The village lies a mile or so to the right of a river, Herr Leutnant, the name of which I cannot at the moment recall. But it's about twenty-five miles inland, and due eastward of the isle of Sylt. The factories are about five miles from the village, I understand."

"Good!" said Henshaw, with a nod of thanks. His tone did not quaver, nor did his face betray a sign, though his heart was pounding against his ribs. The fruit had fallen to him at the very first time of asking. It seemed too easy; the simplicity of the thing was uncanny.

The non-commissioned officer retired to his cards. The Lieutenant, having finished his soup, lit a cigarette. Henshaw glanced at his wrist-watch and affected a start of surprise.

"I must be going," he said.

The Lieutenant was disappointed; there were still hours to kill before the dawn. He pressed Henshaw to stay a little longer, but the latter was obdurate. His superior officer at Bittenfeld would, he said, begin to dispatch relief cars in all directions, unless he got back soon. So he paid his bill, tipped the pale waiter, and he and the Lieutenant found themselves again in the night air.

They had not gone ten paces, and were still in the light from the restaurant windows, when Henshaw saw, away across the aerodrome near the entrance of one of the sheds, a hand-lamp waving oddly, as though in the form of a signal. There came also a warning hail on the still air. In an instant he guessed what had happened. Someone had been on the telephone to Bittenfeld. He would be detained pending inquiries, and then the game would be up. He must seize the last opportunity for getting clear away.

Reluctantly—for the young man had really behaved most accommodatingly—Henshaw dropped his cigarette and swung round on the Lieutenant. The light from the window shone sideways on the young officer's face. Henshaw's arm shot out from the shoulder. His fist, placed with scientific accuracy, struck the Lieutenant like a sledge-hammer on a point just below the chin. The officer's legs seemed to melt under him. Without a cry, or an effort to save himself, he pitched over backwards and lay inert.

Henshaw, filling his lungs with air, sped across the aerodrome towards his machine.

"Confound those men on guard!" he said, fumbling in his pockets for his two automatics. As he did so, the searchlight woke into life again. It flickered here and there, but failed to pick out his quickly-moving figure. And the machine was not far off.

The two men on guard beside the biplane did not know what to do when Henshaw hove in sight at a run. Yet they knew something was wrong. One of them, starting forward irresolutely to meet the airman, called in a harsh voice for him to stop. Henshaw did not speak; he hardly checked himself in his run. But when his automatic pistol had spoken twice, the soldier turned half round clumsily; then he fell on his face. The other man, with a sudden shout of enraged comprehension, whipped up his rifle towards the shoulder. But Henshaw had the advantage of several seconds. One—two—three—four! As fast as he could operate it, the automatic sent out its messengers of death. The soldier staggered, reeled against the lower main-plane of the biplane, and then subsided under it with a groan.

Henshaw leapt into his seat; and in the same moment the searchlight, which had been sweeping the aerodrome wildly, suddenly picked out his biplane.

"Confound it!" said Henshaw, out of breath from his run across the aerodrome.

An instant later, thanks to the self-starter, his engine had broken into its muttering roar, and the biplane began to move forward across the ground. Above the din of the engine, Henshaw could hear sounds like the crackling of sticks in a newly-lit fire. Glancing sideways he saw a series of pin-point flashes leap into life near the sheds.

"Machine-guns," he muttered.

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As he turned back his head to look at the instruments on his dashboard, there came a pain along his forehead as though someone had passed a red-hot iron very quickly across it. He jerked his head back instinctively, and the next moment was blinded by a rush of blood, which poured down his face from the wound he had just received.

The aeroplane was now rushing across the ground at high speed, followed by the beam of the searchlight. Henshaw, more by instinct than design, being only partially in command of his senses, drew back his elevator, and took the machine from the ground into the air. And as he rose—still acting more or less subconsciously—he pushed over his rudder-bar and set the machine on a turn. Then he groped with his free hand in the pocket of his coat and drew out a handkerchief. Blood from his wound was still trickling into his eyes, and he could not see the dashboard. Staunching the blood with the handkerchief, he glanced quickly at his map and compass; then, shifting his rudder-bar again, he brought the machine on the course that would take it back to the coast. The motor was running well; he was climbing fast.

But now he began to feel extremely cold. He had been unable in his haste to resume the big leather-lined coat he had discarded on alighting, and he felt the icy bite of the wind. He was dizzy, too, through the shock of his wound and the loss of blood. He tried to concentrate his gaze on the dashboard, but every few moments it seemed to vanish from before him in a sort of grey-black haze, and he had to blink his eyes rapidly, and make a great effort of will in order to regain control over his faculties.

Suddenly Henshaw became aware that he was swaying in his seat. He felt numb, too; he was sinking into a sort of torpor, in which he was oblivious of all but the hum of his engine.

"Jove!" he gasped, calling on the remnants of his energy. "If I don't look out I shall faint; and in this machine, and at this height and speed, it'll be a case of going to blazes. I must make an effort."

He groped sideways to the rear of his seat and felt for the big coat he knew he had placed there. He found it, and fumbled with it. Then, risking for a moment the taking of his other hand from the control lever, he drew the coat up and across the front of his body, so that it protected him from the cold air. In one of the side pockets of the coat was a small flask. Henshaw pulled this out and opened it, and drank some of the brandy it contained. In the same pocket were some squares of chocolate, and several of these he ate. Warmth began immediately to steal over his body, and his brain grew active again. The bleeding from his forehead had almost ceased, but he had a splitting, headache, which made it difficult for him to think coherently. But his engine still worked smoothly, and his machine rushed through the night on its compass course.

"If the motor keeps going and I don't collapse," he told himself, "there's nothing that need trouble me between here and the coast. But when I come planing down, and fire my signals for the submarine, I must look out for trouble."

IV.

Two hours had passed—hours which to Henshaw had been a nightmare. One moment he had felt icy-cold; the next, his head and hands seemed burning. It was agony for him, with the pain in his head, to bend forward and read his instruments. Yet he had to do this constantly. And all the time he was flying on through the night at nearly twice the speed of an express train, while the clock on his dashboard, and the occasional glimpses he caught of earth-lights below, told him the tale of his progress.

Now, a few miles ahead, lay the coast at the point where he had to cross it. His steering had been accurate, the conditions throughout favourable. But Henshaw, peering ahead, uttered an exclamation of disgust as he saw the rays of many searchlights, stretched in a line along the coast, swinging to and fro in a patient quest.

"I'd climb a bit more, and try to pass over high above them," he said to himself, "but I'm running it close with my petrol. No; I'll just rip through them, and trust to speed."

Several searchlights a little inland he managed to avoid; but then an extremely powerful searchlight, fixed on some point just near the water's edge, caught him fairly in its beam. An instant later there were angry flashes of light from far below, and the anti-aircraft guns began to throw shrapnel-shell skyward. But Henshaw was not greatly concerned at this. His small machine, thousands of feet high, and rushing through the ray of the searchlight, formed an extremely difficult target. He glanced downward. Shells were bursting now with vivid splashes of flame, but they were below him, and to the rear.

He passed out across the coast-line. Only a few miles seaward, as he knew, lay the area patrolled by the submarine which awaited him. He looked at his height-recorder, and began to reduce altitude; then he groped for and found his signal-pistol, so as to be

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ready to give warning to those on the submarine.

Mechanically he glanced back shoreward, and as he did so he felt himself grow rigid with apprehension. Out from the coast, a thousand feet or so below him, outlined for a moment in the swing of a searchlight, and moving fast, appeared a large patrol airship.

"The beggars have seen me; they're on my line," Henshaw told himself.

He thought for a moment, and then murmured:

"I must fire my signals, or the submarine will never see me. And yet these same signals will act as a guide to the airship. She'll tumble to the game in a moment, and come up on us for all she's worth. But there's nothing else for it."

He began now to switch his motor off and on, pointing his bow well downward, and descending rapidly towards the surface of the water. At the same time, thrusting his arm over the side of the hull, he fired the signals from his rocket pistol. Then, aided by a flicker of light that glinted on the moving waves, he steadied his machine in its descent and brought it into as neat a contact with the water as was possible. He knew that such a machine, with a heavy engine, and without gear to enable it to rest on the water, could not be expected to remain long afloat.

Directly his craft touched the surface, Henshaw scrambled from his cockpit and climbed back towards the rear of the hull. His idea was that by bringing his weight to the rear of the machine, he might check the tendency the craft would have to settle down bow first. But, in spite of this redistribution of its load, the machine, after riding a moment or so with its lower plane flush with the surface of the water, took a sudden lurch forward. Its bow, and nearly all the lower main-plane, disappeared beneath the water, while the tail, bearing Henshaw with it, swung upward in the air, and tilted uneasily to and fro with the movement of the waves.

Henshaw clung with difficulty to the sloping surface. He peered out across the dark water, but could see nothing. Again, with a lurch, the biplane buried itself more deeply, and a flick of ice-cold water struck him round the knees.

"She'll go right under in another moment," he told himself. "Where on earth's that submarine?"

His murmured words were cut short, and he drew in his breath with a gasp. Very low, almost above him, and emerging rapidly from a bank of cloud, came the patrol airship. And, as Henshaw gazed upward, a vivid gleam of light, from amidships of her long hull, shone full on him and his partially-submerged machine.

The bow of the airship came round at once, pointing towards him. The throb of her engines seemed to fill the air. Straight for him she came, and Henshaw could do nothing but stare up at her.

"Where's that submarine? Where——?"

He was beginning to shout, scarcely knowing what he did, when he was conscious of a vivid flash of light on the water a little to his left; then there sounded a thunderous roar, like the crash of a mighty gun. Concurrent with this, and almost before the sound reached him, came a fierce drive of spray in his face, followed by the sudden pouring on him of a solid wall of water which swept him like a leaf from his hold on his machine, and hurled him breathless amid turbulent and foam-topped waves.

"The devils dropped a bomb," he told himself mechanically as he struck out blindly. In a moment or so, raising his head, he was conscious of the glare of a searchlight shining directly in his eyes. The shock cleared his mind for an instant, and, looking up, he saw the vast shape of the airship above him. She was hovering even lower than before; her mighty hull seemed to blot out the sky. Her motors had been stopped, and she floated motionless.

"What are they going to do?" Henshaw asked himself vaguely. The pain in his head had become unbearable. Involuntarily he shut his eyes, and felt the movements of his limbs grow feeble.

"I'm done," he told himself, with a kind of grim resignation. But the next instant he opened his eyes again.

From somewhere just behind him, from the surface of the water, there had broken out suddenly a series of sharp, rapid reports.

Henshaw was struggling round awkwardly in the water to see whence this fire had come, when his attention was diverted to the airship above. Something was wrong with her. Her bow had tilted down; and the outline of her hull on one side, as he saw it against the sky, seemed dented in and broken. And still there came the *crack-crack* of the gun from the surface of the water.

Now the airship's motors, waking suddenly to life, filled the air with their din. Flashes of gun-fire came also from her fore-car, while her searchlight, swinging a little, revealed something on the water which Henshaw saw for the first time with gratitude in his heart.

It was the long, slim shape of a submarine, bearing down directly on him, and firing rapidly with her gun at the airship above.

Henshaw began to shout again. He felt suddenly full of life and energy. But his

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Henshaw clung with difficulty to the sloping surface. He peered out across the dark water, but could see nothing. . . . "She'll go right under in another moment," he told himself. "Where on earth's that submarine?"

voice was drowned in the tumult. The airship's engines were thundering, and her machine-guns firing. But she was obviously damaged. Her bow was still down and apparently would not come up, and she swung off awkwardly under the thrust of her propellers.

Those on the submarine had evidently seen Henshaw as he swam in the ray of the searchlight. The vessel's bows moved a little sideways, pointing directly towards him; and all the time her deck-gun, admirably handled, was pouring its fire on the airship. The latter, in difficulties from the start, tried at first to manœuvre so as to drop another bomb. But she would not respond properly to her rudders; and her Commander, realising this disadvantage, and evidently not reckoning his machine-guns a match for the heavier weapon mounted on the submarine, discarded suddenly a quantity of his water-ballast, turned his crippled craft as well as he could, and made away from the neighbourhood of the submarine, climbing rapidly.

Henshaw found himself blinking at the light of a lamp, which appeared only a few feet above him. At the same time, under his hands as he stretched them out, he felt the smooth wet side of the submarine's hull. Then a crisp, cheerful voice hailed him, while willing arms stretched downward.

"Come aboard, old man; we've got to hustle. We want to get our lid on and dive as soon as we can."

Henshaw, completely exhausted, felt himself drawn to safety. He saw friendly faces bending over him, and tried to say something suitable to the occasion. But all his overtaxed brain would permit him to gasp weakly was:

"Jove! I'm a—a lucky devil!"

"You are," agreed the Commander of the submarine, as Henshaw was borne below. "And a deuced good plucked 'un, too," he added under his breath.

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"MY WIFE WON'T LET ME!"

By Lesbia Robinson.

The Hardships of Harassed Husbands, Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

"Is Life Worth Living?"—the unhappy plight of the man whose wife disapproves of all amusements, illustrated by Mr. H. H. Harris.

The average man embarks upon married life under the fixed delusion that laying down the law, like laying down the linoleum, is his special prerogative. In some cases he awakens to the fact that he has married a Sergeant-Major in petticoats, from whose mandates there is no escape save the grave. Even at the best he speedily discovers that his wife—docile though she may be in most things—possesses at least one fixed prejudice against which there is no appeal. It may be a rooted antipathy to tobacco smoke in the drawing-room or a violent dislike of liver and bacon—whatever it is, nothing short of a great offensive will overcome it.

Occasionally a wife's refusal to allow her husband to do something upon which he has set his heart is due to her distrust of his ability to do it creditably. Every wife likes her husband to shine in whatever he undertakes, if it is only because of the reflected glory, and many and unreasoning are the arguments she will advance to prevent his bringing, as she fears, discredit on the family. Because John hardly knows a fish-slice from a colander she will declare him unfit to cope with a motor-cycle; because he confounds nainsook with *crêpe-de-Chine* she considers him incapable of choosing his own winter overcoat, and invests the ceremony with so much pomp and circumstance that John sighs for the Garden of Eden and its informal attire.

"Rallying Round the Flag"—Mr. Douglas Jefferies depicts the man who would like to give £5 for a flag, but whose generosity is curtailed by the inopportune arrival of his wife.

Some wives there are who, possessing the tact of an Ambassador, secure their husband's acquiescence

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"A Life Sentence"—Mr. Treyer Evans gives us the artist who is forbidden ever again to use a model for the figure.

without their being aware of the fact. Others adopt aggressive methods from the first, and are genuinely amazed if their husbands are not duly pulverised by their Tank-like assaults.

This was the case with Mrs. Blunt, a lady who marred an otherwise indulgent attitude towards her husband by an inveterate crusade against his carpet slippers. Certainly there was some excuse for her tirades, for the slippers were suffering from senile decay, and should have been retired from active service long ago. But Mr. Blunt loved them, and turned a deaf ear to entreaties and commands, wherefore his wife took matters into her own hands, and flung the despised footgear into the dustbin.

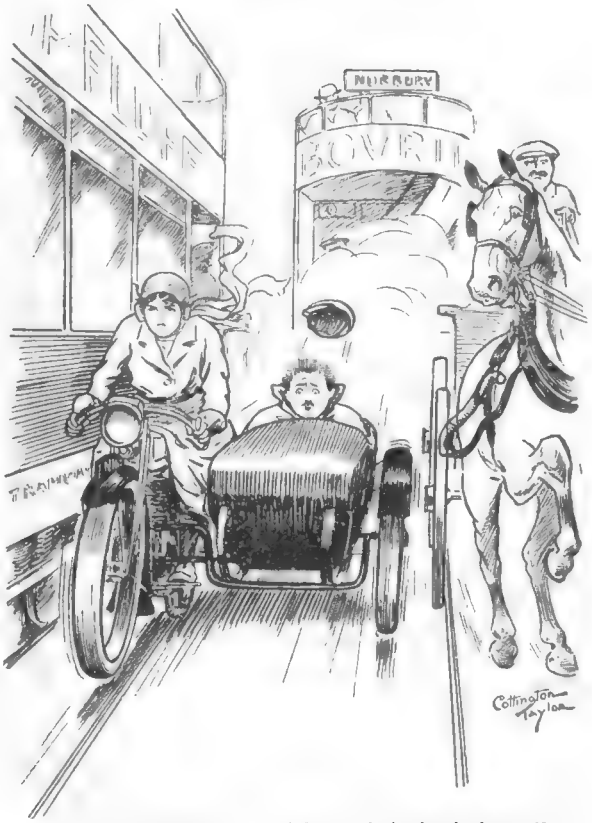
That afternoon Mrs. Blunt boasted of her victory as she dispensed tea and depressing-looking cakes to her lady friends.

"Ernest will be upset at first, but I shall give him steak-and-kidney pudding for dinner, and two lumps of sugar in his coffee, and he'll soon get over it. Anyway, the slippers are in the dustbin, and there's an end of it."

But Mrs. Blunt was mistaken. Half-an-hour later she was in the back garden exhibiting her potato-patch to her admiring friends, when Mrs. Pole-Parkinson, the most exclusive member of the circle, gave an affected scream, and pointed to the path which led to the side gate.

"There's a man pulling things out of your dustbin!" she cried. "Poor fellow! he must be starving! A tramp, perhaps—he looks woefully shabby."

Mrs. Blunt made two steps forward; then she paused as the man swooped suddenly upon some unseen treasure, and, uttering a cry of triumph, brandished two unspeakably dirty objects in his hand. She knew them at once—they were the carpet slippers, and the man who was methodically removing stray cabbage stalks and other vegetable products from his clothing was her husband! Wherefore Mrs. Blunt, being humbled before her friends, countermanded the steak pudding, and fed her irritating spouse on boiled rice and vegetable cutlets of doubtful antecedents.



"A Perilous Passage"—the sad fate of the husband whose wife will not allow him to ride the motor-cycle himself, portrayed by Mr. Cottington Taylor.

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Some husbands make a practice of ignoring their wives' sternest behests, and trust to luck to see them through when their lapses from grace are discovered. Mr. Harty was one of these, a jovial soul whose wife—although a positive magician amid the pots and pans—refused to be cumbered with the serving necessary for him to entertain his friends. Even when, making his birthday an excuse, Mr. Harty pleaded for hospitality for his three closest cronies, his wife remained adamant, and invented, on the spur of the moment, an engagement to spend that very

"The Descent of Man"—Mr. Reg. F. Smith has great sympathy with the man who yearns to fly, and is not permitted to do so.

day with her married sister on the other side of London.

Mrs. Harty, returning from her visit on that day, was petrified to behold a light in the dining-room, and narrowly escaped heart failure when she walked in and discovered her husband and his three friends seated at table engaged in making a huge dish of her bottled cherries look extremely foolish.

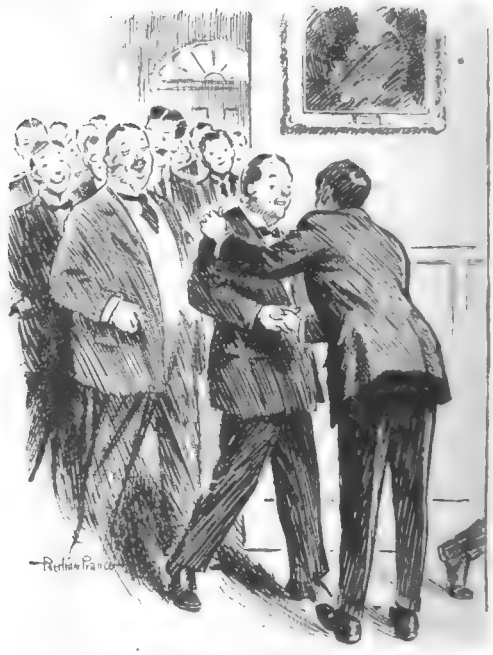
"Hawkins cooked the joint and vegetables," explained her husband; "he's had experience—camping out and all that—and your store-cupboard was a godsend. We'll clear up; you needn't worry a bit about it."

Nevertheless, Mrs. Harty worried a great deal, especially when she found her best

"A Permanent Fixture"—the temptation of the husband whose wife forbids him to part with his moustache, depicted by Mr. Thomas Henry.

casserole coated with burnt milk and her milk-saucepan reeking of onions.

"Save me trouble, indeed!" snapped Mrs. Harty when her husband explained the reason of his experiment. "Why, I'd rather cook you a six-course dinner than clear up all the mess you've made," which admission her husband hugs jealously to his bosom in readiness for his next birthday.



"The More the Merrier!"—Mr. Bertram Prance's idea of the little gathering a married man would like to have if only his wife would let him.

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For "Soldiers and Sailors Too"

All the contributions on this page were sent in by officers and men serving in H.M. Forces. A pack of ROYAL playing-cards or a silver pencil-case is given for every accepted storyette, joke, bit of verse, or drawing sent in by a sailor or soldier. Please say which gift you prefer, and address envelopes to The O.C., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

FED UP!

It was a very dark night, and the digging party was having difficulty in getting sorted out.

"Halt in front!" "About turn!" "Close up to the right!" "Ease out there!" Contrary orders were rife. At last a weary voice from the ranks said:

"Move to the right in bundles . . . Form 'caps!"

LONG SERVICE.

A soldier reported sick on active service with swollen knees. The Medical Officer, on examining them, said:

"Oh, you can't go to the trenches, my man. How long have you had those knees?"

"Thirty-five years, sir," was the unexpected reply.

A PAYING GAME.

A private was brought before his officer—a very young sub—on a charge of overstaying leave to the extent of three hours.

The officer, not at all sure what punishment he could administer for the crime, at last gave him two months.

"Sir," said the Sergeant-Major, "you can't give him two months for that."

"Well, two weeks," said the officer.

"But, sir, that's impossible."

"Well, what can I give him, Sergeant-Major?" whispered the confused young sub.

"Two days' pay, sir," was the reply, whereupon the officer took 2s. 4d. from his pocket, and turning to the inwardly amused "criminal" said:

"Here you are, here's two days' pay, but if you do it again, you won't get anything."

"They say the war won't be over for ten years! They can't 'ave 'eard my Bill joined up yesterday!"

NATURAL HISTORY.

A British "Tommy," who was a stranger to London, was travelling from Brixton to the "Elephant and Castle." When he neared his destination he touched the conductor on the arm with his cane.

"Tell me, chum, is this the 'Elephant'?"

"No," growled the man, "it's the conductor."

NO RETURN FOR CASSIDY.

Patrick came over to England to make his fortune, but found it harder than his friends had led him to believe, so that he decided to join the Army, and enlisted in the Artillery. He had not been a soldier many days before he was put on guard with a north countryman named Cassidy, over an old gun.

Said Pat: "Hi! Cassidy, have ye iver fired this gun at all?"

"No," replied Cassidy.

"Then, begorra, we'll fire it to-night, but we musn't waste the shell. You hold that old bucket over the muzzle to catch it as it comes out."

"Righto!" said Cassidy, and placed the bucket in position while Pat fired the gun.

A short while after, the Orderly Officer came round, and seeing only one man on guard, inquired for Cassidy.

"Shure, sorr, Cassidy's gone wid the bucket," replied Pat.

"When will he be back?" asked the officer.

"Well, sorr, if he comes back as quickly as he went away, he won't be half a second."

They are still waiting for Cassidy to come back.

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PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo *Daily Sketch.*

These ladies are collecting for Red Cross Funds in Nigeria. Their methods differ somewhat from ours in that they carry their collecting boxes on their heads.

FLAG DAY IN NIGERIA.

Even the ladies of Nigeria have turned their attention to war-work in the shape of street collections, and these smiling damsels were snapped while collecting for Red Cross funds. The method of the Nigerian ladies differs somewhat from that adopted by our own countrywomen, for instead of the collecting-box being hung on the arm or round the neck, it is carried on the head.

This is a custom which is extremely unlikely to become popular over here, but it is just possible that it may set a new fashion in hats!

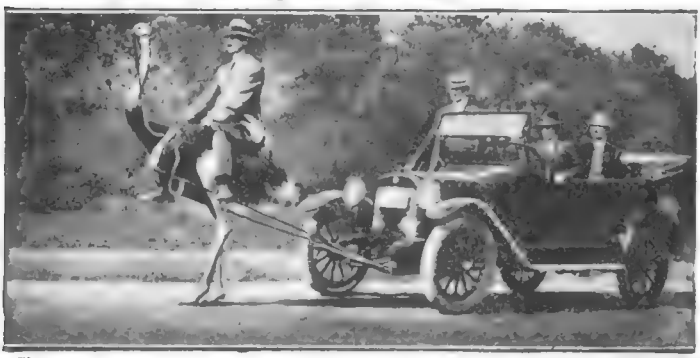

Photo *By courtesy of Popular Mechanics.*

To settle a bet regarding the strength of an ostrich, a bird was harnessed to a motor-car in California, and was able to pull the conveyance quite easily while carrying its trainer on its back.

A FEATHERED STEED.

In order to settle a bet regarding the strength of an ostrich, a bird from an ostrich farm in California was harnessed to a motor-car to see if it could pull so heavy a load.

It was found that the bird could pull the car up a gentle slope quite easily, and at the same time carry its trainer on its back.

"AS OBSTINATE AS A MULE!"

Judging from the many and varied accounts of their eccentric behaviour recorded by those who have suffered at their hoofs during the present war, Army mules would appear to be fearful and wonderful animals who possess great individuality of character and power to reduce stern, strong soldiers to a state verging on imbecility.

This particular specimen looks fairly docile and is being used so that recruits for the American Army may learn the art of packing a mule. The mule is first blindfolded, and then fitted with the regular Army pack-saddle.

Photo *Fox press.*

Soldiers of the U.S. Army instructing recruits in the art of packing an Army mule. The animal is blindfolded and then fitted with the regular Army pack-saddle.

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A QUAINT OLD PRISON HOUSE.

In cases where a stony-hearted government decides that for the ennobling of one's character a term of separation from one's fellow-men is essential, there are many more forbidding-looking places in which to undergo this beneficial treatment than the Round House at Shenley, in Hertfordshire, which, though it is no longer used for this purpose, was once the temporary abode of those inhabitants of the village whose feet had strayed from the path of virtue.

The sinner who found himself in this quaint old prison was not simply dumped down and left to think things over in his own way, for over the barred windows or embrasures are inscribed suitable remarks to be read and pondered over. "Do well and fear not," reads one inscription, while over the other window the words "Be sober, be vigilant," have probably served as a reproof to many a man, and they also seem to hint at the way in which the local Shenleyites were most likely to fall from virtue! But there is a sort of poetic justice in the fact that the last visitor to the Round House is said to have been a publican!

Photo *F. M. McLaren.*

The Round House at Shenley, Herts, which was formerly used as a place of detention for erring inhabitants of the village.

THE ARMOURED CAR IN AMERICA.

The armoured car is an outstanding feature of modern warfare, and this one, which hails from the land of our latest Ally, America, boasts a contrivance, seen on the front of the car, by means of which it can cut its way through any barbed wire that may attempt to interfere with its progress.

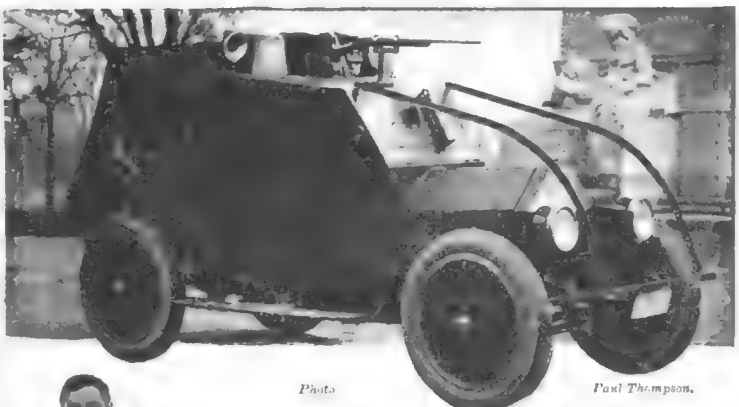

Photo *Paul Thompson.*

A member of the Massachusetts Volunteer Militia driving an armoured motor-car. The arrangement shown in front enables the car to cut its way through barbed wire.

Photo *F. D. Reynolds.*

This lifebuoy was picked up by a patrol boat in the English Channel. The buoy was covered with a growth of barnacles which points to the fact that it must have been in the water for at least a year.

RESCUED! A BUOY.

At first glance this object appears to be a large wreath, but closer inspection reveals the fact that it is nothing more than a lifebuoy entirely covered with barnacles.

The buoy was picked up in the English Channel some little time ago by one of our patrol vessels. Judging from the remarkable growth on it, the lifebuoy must have been in the water over twelve months. It was impossible to discover what ship it had belonged to, for when it was picked up nearly all the canvas covering had rotted away.

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ANOTHER ENTERTAINING STORY OF MR. GUMBLAY.

The Unrepentant Ward

By F. E. Baily.

Mr. Gumblay, invalided out of the Army, spends much of his enforced leisure in smoothing out the tangled love-affairs of other people. This story relates how, by the exercise of much tact and strategy, he awakened a dry-as-dust Government official to the fact that there are far greater joys in life than an entire absorption in Ministerial affairs, thus bringing on his head the heartfelt thanks of the charming, though headstrong Ursula.

I.

Mr. Cyprian Gumblay (invalided), in his fashionable Half Moon Street breakfast-room, sat enjoying an after-breakfast cigarette. His legs, clad in riding-boots, the inspired manufacture of venerable and experienced craftsmen, and breeches tailored by the hand of genius, were extended towards a cheery fire; his eyes dwelt moodily on a little row of four steel cases which adorned the mantel-piece. These relics of Armageddon Mr. Gumblay was in the habit of presenting, after conversion by jewellers into something useful, to such of his more cherished friends as undertook the risks of matrimony.

"Once there were six," he murmured, a reminiscent expression lighting his pale, intelligent face—for he was still young enough to be intelligent, counting but twenty-seven years—"now there are four. It sounds like the history of the ten little nigger boys. I wonder how long these will last? I think I shall keep the sixth for myself in case of accident, as heroes do the last cartridge in short stories. It is a piteous thought."

"Sir," announced Lucas, the ideal servant, bred from boy to man in Mr. Gumblay's family—"sir, the man has arrived with the 'orse."

"Thank you, Lucas," murmured Mr. Gumblay, preparing to rise. Lucas coughed with a hollow and deprecatory sound.

"Sir, it grieves me to see you still looking far from strong. I hope it is not a liberty if I say I take your sad 'ealth very much to heart, Mr. Cyprian, sir. I could wish to see you looking more robust."

"Ah, Lucas, in the spring no doubt I shall improve," murmured Mr. Gumblay, rising and taking whip and gloves from Lucas' outstretched hand. "Marvellous things occur in spring; it is the time of the singing of birds. Perhaps I shall get married; one requires to be very strong to get married. I hope he hasn't brought that abominable brown this morning. I feel in the mood for the female chestnut."

It was the female chestnut who a few minutes later proceeded to pick her way with delicate, cat-like steps towards the Park. The cold was intense, and she would have resented it with little jumps of impatience if she had not been a perfect lady, and Mr. Gumblay a perfect gentleman, with feather-like hands and infinite understanding.

Entering one of the Park gateways he broke into a canter, eventually bringing up in the Ladies' Mile, where he reined the chestnut into a trot. In the distance he had observed a girlish figure which had attracted his wandering interest.

As he drew nearer he slowed to a walk in order to enjoy a better view. The girl came towards him also at a walk, astride a satiny brown full of skilfully restrained fire. From her Bond Street hat to her little top-boots she was flawless, utterly beyond criticism. Her long coat more than fitted—it might have grown on to her; her stock set off to admiration the daintiest, naughtiest chin in the world; her eyes were blue as the deep blue sea, and sparkled with sheer joy in being alive to ride a good horse among worthy surroundings. She was more than pretty, with a laughing, devil-may-care prettiness that coaxed the ghost of a smile to Mr. Gumblay's pale, rather disillusioned face. When she had passed he even turned to note approvingly her straight back and the proud carriage of her little head.

"About twenty, I s'pose, and doesn't care a tinker's curse for anything or anybody,"

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said Mr. Gumblay to his soul. "Well, *I* was twenty myself once—a long time ago."

He proceeded slowly at a mournful walk, to the annoyance of the chestnut. Presently, at the sound of a rush of hoofs behind her, she sprang into a canter, and Mr. Gumblay found himself involuntarily riding for the moment almost knee to knee with his Diana who had turned to overtake him. Before he had time to do more than realise this fact, one of the barbarian horsemen in a morning-coat, trousers, and yellow gaiters, charged down at him on a wry-necked, whale-headed scarecrow fighting for the bit; its rider precipitated matters by fetching it a severe clout with his crop on the offside of its neck, causing it to swerve violently against Mr. Gumblay in passing, so that he in turn cannoned against the girl. They controlled their agitated steeds with difficulty, and halted. Mr. Gumblay raised his hat.

"I'm extremely sorry," he began courteously. "I ought to have foreseen the chance greengrocer on his wild rocking-horse. I do hope I haven't hurt you."

The unknown Diana laughed.

"Please don't apologise. I'm quite all right. What a ripping chestnut you've got. She looks so well behaved beside Satan. This horse I'm riding is Satan. He's awfully cross this morning. You look rather cross, too. Is it the sporting greengrocer who annoyed you, or just your natural expression?"

"That is not crossness but relief at your safety," explained Mr. Gumblay. "I don't know how I could have faced your nurse if you had been killed or even injured. She is probably an elderly Scotswoman of ferocious appearance."

The big blue eyes looked straight into his with bland sarcasm.

"That's awfully clever of you. I s'pose it was meant to put me in my place? What would you say if I told you I am beyond the control of those in charge of me, and live my own life though I am but twenty?"

"Please don't," pleaded Mr. Gumblay. "I should probably dismount and trot up and down with Azalea on my back, or take her to tea at the Ritz. Azalea is the chestnut. Say you don't mean it, guv'ness. It sounds like a fairy tale."

The damsel flicked Satan with a dainty, cutting whip, and they moved on. There was a light in her eye not lost upon Mr. Gumblay.

"I daresay you'd be very useful to me," she reflected aloud. "You're so beautifully turned-out and decorative, and—— Oh! I beg your pardon." Her glance softened for a moment as it caught the small gold stripe on his left sleeve. "Still, I think I want you. It's impossible to be coherent here on this beast, and, besides, you don't know the circumstances, and they are rather complicated. You may take me to dinner at half-past six, and I'll go into details. I know it's rather early, but you'll understand why when I've told you everything. Where are you in the habit of dining, Mr.—ah—er—um?"

She brought Satan a little nearer with a touch of her off spur, and smiled so that there remained no hope for him at all.

"My name is Cyprian Gumblay. I am delighted. The Restaurant *Magnifique*, Miss——?"

"Ursula will be enough for the present, Cyprian. I shall have to call you Cyprian later, so you may as well get used to it. Don't be shy about my Christian name. You may meet me at the *Magnifique* at 6.30. Thank you for being kind enough to take me to dinner at such an expensive place. I'll try to find a frock worthy of you. Good-bye."

She waved an affectionate hand and cantered off. Mr. Gumblay turned homewards with the light of a new interest illumining his pale countenance.

"She is a distracting little piece. I wonder what scrape I have to get her out of?" he murmured to his soul.

II.

"You see, Cyprian," explained the delighted Ursula, seated in the cream and gold exoticism of the Restaurant *Magnifique*, with Aristide himself hovering respectfully in the background—"you see, I am unique." She engulfed a salted almond dreamily, pausing just long enough in the process for him to become aware of her adorable little teeth. Then she rested her chin on her clasped hands, and proceeded:

"For example, I am very pretty, but you couldn't call me vain or spoilt. Also I am on the stage, and yet at the same time I am quite a lady. If—I say *if*—I were to let my head rest on your shoulder no tell-tale powder would remain on your coat, for instance, and you may have noticed I don't reek of Shem-el-Nessim, or anything of that sort. Moreover, as I told you before, I am only twenty. I live my own life, and no one says me nay. Well?"

"I hope it *is* well," said Mr. Gumblay piously. "How long have you been on the stage? A week? Forgive me, but I know the stage. In my youth it was part of a young man's education."

"A fortnight, as a matter of fact, though I don't see how you could tell. It's part of my dark secret that you must help me in, though I shall never reveal it. Briefly,

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Cyprian, I want a presentable young man to be seen about with. It's a necessity for a young actress. I want him to appear regularly in the stalls, so that I can smile upon him, thus propitiating the manager. I want him to take me to places where I ought to go —restaurants, dances, and things. All this lays the foundation of my career, but you understand I can't run about with *any*body. When you bumped against Satan I saw that Providence had delivered you into my hands. You will do this for me, won't you, Cyprian? It's *so* important."

Her blue eyes brooded upon him, more inscrutable, more unfathomable than the fish-pools of Heshbon.

"Why *me?*" inquired Mr. Gumblay with some plaintiveness. "What have *I* done? Why not someone young and frivolous? Think of my years and stainless reputation. What will all my friends say? They will call me a baby-snatcher at the very least."

"Cyprian, don't be so unkind and make me so miserable! I chose you because you are not exactly old, and yet you aren't a boy. You're nice and steady and dependable. You see, it isn't all frivolity with me; there's something serious behind it that I may tell you about some day. I can worry through, if only you'll help me, and not be an ass, and all that."

Mr. Gumblay drained a glass of white wine and sighed.

"Don't you belong to anyone, Ursula? Isn't there some aged relative who can give me a certificate of indemnity if I start running about with you? Forgive my mentioning that you are under age. Why not trust me with the story of your life, or, conversely, give up this idea of yours that is extremely flattering yet slightly awkward?"

Ursula's little April face hardened for a moment. Then her distracting smile broke over it once more. She assumed the air of one laying all her cards upon the table.

"My name is Ursula Brent. I live in Lowndes Square with my guardian, Sir Leo Paradine. He's about fifty, and the greatest darling. He's always let me do as I like because he knows I can take care of myself. He let me go on the stage; he has shares in the Comity Theatre, and he got the manager to put me in—excuse me—the beauty chorus. It was to distract my mind, because at the time I needed distraction. I threatened to run away if he did not let me. Our car always takes me and fetches me, and William, the chauffeur, is as good as a grandmother. You shall come to-morrow night and dine with us and meet Leo, if you like. He's awfully overworked in one of the new Government departments, but he always dines with me when he can. There! Will that do?"

Mr. Gumblay smiled again.

"I am yours henceforth to do as you like with, Ursula. I go into this unknown sphere with a light heart. Thank you for your dinner invitation, which I am delighted to accept. No doubt Sir Leo and I will be great friends though. Really, Ursula, all this *dévergondage* seems to me a sad waste of time in your case. You are a beautiful child, made for love. Has it never entered into your life? If not, why not?"

"Cyprian, I implored you some time ago not to be an ass, yet you descend to this infantile drivel. What have I done to deserve it?"

"Nothing at all. I am crushed. I eat my words," apologised Mr. Gumblay, rejoicing secretly to know that he had fathomed the mystery. "She is in love," he assured his soul, "and they have quarrelled. Hence the stage as a distraction, made possible by the complacency of the share-possessing old gentleman. No doubt it also serves to make the young man in the case writhe. He fears other admirers, and shudders. Obviously also I am intended to be an additional thorn in his side."

The next evening Mr. Gumblay's six-cylinder two-seater bore him to Lowndes Square, and Sir Leo made him welcome. Plainly the guardian doted on the ward. Their affection for one another provided a beautiful and impressive spectacle. For the rest, Ursula, radiant in a low-cut gown that clasped her slender beauty like a discreet lover, would have etherealised a banquet of bread and water.

Sir Leo took Mr. Gumblay straightway to his heart.

"A charming child, Ursula," he observed dispassionately over port and cigars. "A little pale lately, though. I diagnose it as heart trouble, my dear Gumblay. '*Peur au peu d'amour, un peu d'amour,*'" continued Sir Leo, who had once been third secretary (unpaid) at the British Embassy in Paris. "Upon my word, I thought she and young Teague were going to make a match of it. I quite approved, too, quite approved. Personal secretary to Lazenby Pott, you know, Minister of Organisation. A risin' young feller, quite a risin' young feller, with a decent place in Leicestershire."

"No, really?" murmured Mr. Gumblay. "What was the bone of contention, do you think?"

"A bit too straitlaced," gloomed Sir Leo. "Mind a bit too departmental. Ursula's just the age to kick over the traces, you know. Now I always concede myself. Sound, very

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Mr. Gumblay drained a glass of white wine and sighed. "Don't you belong to anyone, Ursula? Isn't there some aged relative who can give me a certificate of indemnity if I start running about with you?"

sound! You're a man of the world, Gumblay. Couldn't you give these young people a shove in the right direction? I'll introduce you to Teague like a shot, my dear feller. I——"

"Mr. Teague!" announced the butler in carefully-unemotional tones.

A tall, ultra-fashionable young man entered in the manner of one accustomed to public speaking. He greeted Sir Leo with the charming deference of a committeeman to a chairman, and sank into an armchair and placed the finger-tips of one hand against those of the other. Mr. Gumblay watched him with concealed delight.

"Well, Teague, how's the Ministry?" queried Sir Leo facetiously. "Let me introduce you. Mr. Teague, Mr. Gumblay. Ah! Try the port, Anthony. I imagine you've dined? Ursula ought to be down in a minute. Rotten news in the papers, what?"

"We must await the psychological moment," observed Mr. Teague darkly, looking from Mr. Gumblay to Sir Leo and back again. "We must organise the country, Sir Leo. Everyone in his place and a place for everyone. Capital hand in hand with Labour, one mind, one factory, and one thought. That is our object."

"Good Lord!" murmured Mr. Gumblay to his soul. "So that is Ursula's first choice in the matrimonial stakes. Aren't women a marvel!"

He studied Anthony Teague's face—clever, intellectual, yet with a mouth shaped for the utterance of platitudes. Then entered Ursula, cloaked for conquest.

"Ready to take me to the theatre, Cyprian?" she queried in honeyed accents, and then casually:

"Hullo, Anthony! Left the tape and sealing-wax for a quarter-of-an-hour? Can you trust the Government alone?"

"My dear Ursula, we must trust the Government. It is all we have to trust," complained Anthony.

Mr. Gumblay rose.

"Beauty beckons—I follow," he said simply. "Good-night, Sir Leo. I've enjoyed your port immensely. Good-night, Teague. Glad to have met you. May I ring you up some time, and perhaps we might do something together? Ursula, I am your dog as usual."

They departed to an attendant limousine, driven by the faithful William. Within its upholstered depths Ursula nestled against Mr. Gumblay.

"I thought I loved that once," she confessed with faint bitterness. "He's better than he looks, Cyprian dear, but these Government departments are deathly things. They sort of deaden the mind with cotton-wool. Anthony simply hates my being on the stage. He's afraid I'll show my legs or something. But they're nothing to be ashamed of, are they?"

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"I don't know," declared Mr. Gumblay. "It is a subject of which I am entirely ignorant."

At the stage-door they parted with a little affectionate squeeze of his hand from Ursula. Thence Mr. Gumblay shuddered to his appointed stall. He knew too well what he was going to see.

III.

For the reformation of Anthony it behoved Mr. Gumblay to pick up the threads of a former existence—that is to say, he re-discovered Beauty Maxwell and called upon her. Once upon a time she had been dearer, by several hundred pounds, to him than anyone else in the world.

He found her in Sandringham Court, W., where she received him charmingly in one of those perfect sitting-rooms made by giving the furniture man a free hand and then tying large bows of expensive ribbon on everything. She appreciated Mr. Gumblay's tact in calling at 11.45 a.m.—not so early as to find her in bed, not so late that he interfered with luncheon.

"Good-morning, Beauty dear," he began respectfully; "really, you look younger than ever. What a baby you always were. Is it still the beauty chorus, or are you a bill-topper? I am come back from the dead ignorant as a person from Eigan."

She leant back in her armchair and let him admire her perfectly-dressed locks and scrupulously-groomed loveliness.

"Quite a little star now, Cyprian. You're looking rotten, poor boy. What is it? Do you want to take me out to somewhere to lunch, or ask me to marry you, or to be a sister to you? Have a cigarette and tell me."

"The fact is," explained Mr. Gumblay, "I want to give a little supper party. I was thinking of taking the *Salon d'Or* at the Quinquennial—rather a decent place, you know. I wondered if you could bring along one or two bright young people. I will provide a bevy of nice boys, and one who will be nice when we've done with him, I hope. He is a trifle on the starchy side at the moment. I want to remedy this for the sake of a little friend who is in love with him. Do help, like a good girl. The beanfeast is on Thursday night. We can get Tritto Miste, the violinist man, up from the restaurant afterwards, and a piano, and dance a little. They tell me he can really play after three cocktails, and after four he makes Kubelik look quite silly."

"You mean, in fact, a bit of a rag, Cyprian? It sounds rather fun. There's a general supposed to be taking me out on Thursday, but he doesn't matter. [illegible] simply topping girls. [illegible] want? Will six do?"

"I think six, and yourself [illegible] have the honour, Beauty dearest, [illegible] delightful person. I don't know how [illegible] have existed without you all this time. [illegible] lunch with me, and let's plot the [illegible] I have the nicest six-cylinder in Lou[illegible] side. I know you've got something [illegible] match her."

Beauty wriggled sinuously out of her [illegible], and the Paris *saut-de-lit* she wore fe[illegible] appealing lines round her young form.

"You are a dear, Cyprian. I always [illegible] you better than all the other boys. [illegible] minutes. Rosalie, where are you?"

With musical shrieks she danced [illegible] the room. Half-an-hour later, clothed [illegible] poem of the new dead-mouse shade [illegible] departed lunchward with Mr. Gumblay.

Back in the smoking-room of his [illegible] Moon Street abode, he stretched out a l[illegible] hand for the telephone and rang u[illegible] Ministry of Organisation.

"Oh, is that you, Teague? I belie[illegible] Leo told me you were free on Th[illegible] evening. I am giving a little supper [illegible] and there are one or two people comin[illegible] would like very much to meet you. [illegible] Government chaps are such lions in [illegible] days. Miss Brent is looking in afte[illegible] theatre. It's at the Quinquennial—th[illegible] one rather well there, I believe, altho[illegible] suppose you are interested in higher [illegible] than mere fleshpots. What?"

"Thank you, Gumblay. I believe [illegible] just get away on Thursday. Very go[illegible] you, I'm sure."

"Then may I pick you up at the Mi[illegible] at about ten?"

"Perhaps, on second thoughts, you [illegible] call at my chambers in Bury Street," gested Mr. Teague. His host placed a [illegible] over the transmitter, giggled, and [illegible] acquiesced.

"Very decent of you to come whe[illegible] are so rushed," he concluded. "On T[illegible] day, then. Good-bye."

Mr. Gumblay then got into touch [illegible] various clubs and hotels, selecting six [illegible] naval and military officers of his acquain[illegible] with great care. He rested from his lab[illegible] for an hour, and proceeded finally to [illegible] Ursula tea at one of those fashio[illegible] caravanserais where it is well for as[illegible] young actresses to be seen. He arra[illegible] during the ceremony for her to be pr[illegible] at his supper party.

In all the history of the *Salon d'Or* at [illegible] Quinquennial, which is not written, [illegible] vibrates in the memory of various gifted

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The young men coaxingly persuaded him to cunning beverages; the maidens hovered round him in open admiration until Miss Baby Carteret . . . exclaimed: "Tony, dear, I *know* you could jump over three daisies side by side. Do do it for me." [*Page 232, col. 2.*]

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charming people, there has occurred no supper party like unto the supper party given by Mr. Cyprian Gumblay for the redemption of Anthony Teague and the conduct of Ursula Brent into the blissful matrimonial haven longed for by many and cursed by not a few subsequent to casting anchor.

There were curious and exciting dishes on the menu and wines cooled by the everlasting snows of an expensive refrigerating plant. Six perfect buds of girlhood, six unutterable peaches from the incomparable orchard of the Supremity Theatre, garbed in the wildest indiscretions of the day after to-morrow, led the mirth and silvery laughter. Six of the bravest of the brave aided or abetted them, while Mr. Gumblay danced with lazy perfection, Beauty Maxwell clasped irreproachably in his experienced arms.

He delivered over Anthony Teague to the youthful cherubim and seraphim. The young men coaxingly persuaded him to cunning beverages; the maidens hovered round him in open admiration until Miss Baby Carteret, privileged by her mere seventeen years, exclaimed with her most fascinating smile:

"Tony, dear, I *know* you could jump over three daisies side by side. Do do it for me. Albert Edward says you can't." Albert Edward, incidentally, was professionally a sailor.

When the applause had subsided and Anthony Teague rose from the finest dancing-floor in Europe, it was only to join in a wheelbarrow race, in which he finished third, his barrow being Miss Seraphine Montgomery, a promising blonde. Just as he breasted the tape Ursula, arriving late from her theatrical activities, entered the *Salon d'Or*.

Mr. Gumblay sprang forward in welcome. Anthony Teague relinquished two exceedingly fair ankles and attempted to become ministerial. It was a sad failure. A little curious smile dimpled the fair face of Ursula; it did not escape Mr. Gumblay, who raised his eyebrows faintly in her direction. But Ursula had drifted away in the arms of a devoted cavalryman to the strains of that most haunting and delightful of waltzes, "*Je m'en fiche.*"

Henceforward Anthony Teague essayed to pull himself together in vain. His new-found friends were too insistent. They drowned his ministerial honour in a shallow cup and sold his reputation for a song. It is only fair to record that Ursula lived up to her designation of a child she-bear; in the leap-frog tournament none excelled her in agility.

Long after midnight Mr. Gumblay saw the last of his guests off the premises and proceeded to take Ursula home.

"Well, little one," he queried, glancing momentarily at the fair young head beside him, "what do you think of your Anthony now? He has red blood in him, has he not, even if it takes mingled wines and lovely maidens to stir it up? Have you come to any conclusions, Ursula *mia?* Do not tell me if you would rather not."

Ursula laid one little hand, covered with a coat of the finest wet white, on her companion's sleeve.

"We are engaged, Cyprian dear. It happened during that game of Postman's Knock, when Anthony was out and said three hundred letters for Ursula. When I went outside the door he was standing there with his tie all undone and a wreath of carnations on his head, and suddenly he got all miserable and said: 'Oh, Ursula, what a fool you must think me!' And as I really love Anthony, and, strangely enough, Cyprian, I only adopted you, decent as you are, just to annoy him and bring him to see the light, so to speak, I put that kiss look on my face, and he kissed me really, not just pussy kisses."

Mr. Gumblay corrected a diabolical skid with masterly hands.

"May Heaven be good to you, Ursula, and now there are three," he said with fervent piety.

"Three what?" demanded Ursula, but Mr. Gumblay refused to tell her.

"It's either animal, vegetable, or mineral, and you'll know just before your wedding," he explained.

This mysterious dialogue occurred to him on the morrow, when, clad in a pale blue silk dressing-gown, he pushed aside the breakfast things and reached for one of his shell-cases.

"The usual claret-jug, please, Lucas," he observed, handing the object to that impeccable servant. "And perhaps the goldsmiths' and silversmiths' people could work some child she-bears into the decorations. They would represent a most appropriate touch."

(Another episode in the career of Cyprian Gumblay appears next month, in which he comes to the rescue of a lady who, past her first youth, longs for the appreciation and excitement so long denied her.)

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By Walter Morris.

"Yet leave me not; yet, if thou wilt, be free;
Love me no more, but love my love of thee."

I.

Business was slack in the office of Montagu, Graham & Co., of Nagasaki, but Mr. Montagu, seated at his desk nibbling a penholder, eyed his partner's sprawling attitude of luxurious indifference with considerable disfavour. Not that the affairs of the firm were suffering thereby, but in a heart to heart talk a broad back staring one in the face, as it were, is not encouraging.

"Mind you," he resumed, and the determined inflection of his voice made the other sigh wearily, "I've nothing against O-Ke-San personally; far from it—she's a dear. Known her since she was born; but that isn't the point. She is a Jap; you are English. The two won't mix. I've seen some, and I know. You are practically a newcomer to this country, so take that from me as Gospel.

It's all right for a time until the novelty wears off, or until, say, the kids start coming, and you know what a Jap kid is like, don't you? Well, a half-caste is a dashed sight worse! But that isn't the point either—though even then you'll begin to feel somewhat outside the pale. The point is this: some day you'll see an English girl or an American, at any rate a European. She'll happen to be *the* one. Very well, you'll look at her, talk to her, listen to her—you can't help that, you're made that way—then you'll look and talk and listen to your wife. What then? Why, you'll start thinking—which, I might mention, you've never done yet——"

Graham grinned in keen enjoyment, and lit a cigarette.

"And you'll form a comparison," concluded the oracle impressively. "Where will O-Ke-San be then?"

Now when a man attains to years of discretion and maturity, which he does, of course, when he is twenty-five, and a rough, old fogey of fifty butts in with some unpleasant—to say nothing of unflattering—remarks on matters relating to the heart, he usually reaches out for the first missile handy. But, if he is of an equable temperament, instead of getting annoyed, he smiles with an easy tolerance, or even with pity.

Mr. Montagu, however, was privileged; he was the senior partner. So, as Bob Graham's temperament was nothing if not equable, he duly smiled with easy tolerance and threw a little pity into it as a sort of make-weight. Then he yawned, stood up and stretched himself, and sauntered to the door, picking up his hat on the way.

"Of all the blighting pessimists I've ever come across," he remarked cheerfully, "you are the limit. I'm going for a walk."

The door banged to, and Mr. Montagu sat staring into the fire with troubled eyes.

II.

The four months following the wedding was one long honeymoon to O-Ke-San, and her honourable lord was duly worshipped as one even greater than Buddha. Boating trips, moonlight strolls, and sunlight ones, too, along the sea-shore or the terraced hillsides occupied their days. Mostly their wanderings terminated at a certain secluded spot below the edge of a wood on a terrace overlooking the sea. A votive shrine to one Kwannonsama was there, which, if he tired of kissing his wife, Bob pelted with small pebbles. O-Ke-San, devout worshipper though she

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was, thought nothing of that, for there were gods whom to worship one had to spit upon.

But that is by the way.

Sometimes of an evening European friends were entertained in the wonderful English drawing-room (the house was half Japanese, half English), and O-Ke-San would radiate with joy and pride that she should apparently be considered the equal of the honourable Graham San, her husband, and petted, praised, and flattered so profusely that her dear little head fairly whirled, and her dear little heart sang a triumphant pæan in wonder and thanksgiving to her gods. But there were other evenings when they were alone together, just they two, which filled her with a strange and silent awe, such as she might feel were she transported suddenly to the mysterious portals of Nirvana; though Nirvana itself, she feared, could never hold such exquisite bliss.

But all things must come to an end—good things the quickest.

There was truth born of experience in Mr. Montagu's fatherly advice, as he had said, though he did not dream that the unwitting cause of the trouble would be his own daughter. He did not know even that he possessed such a beautiful creature. When he sent her away a few years before to finish her education, she was a lanky gawk of a girl, but he was staggered at the radiant vision which now hurled itself into his arms in joyous reunion.

She was a lovely specimen of English girlhood, lithe and upright of figure, with eyes bright and blue and laughing, and a complexion that vied with the softness of a peach and the colouring of a red, red rose. Her goodness, too, equalled her charms, and with her delightful *camaraderie* she was quickly on the best of terms with Graham, whom she had heard of from her father, and was highly enthusiastic over everything concerning her old playmate, O-Ke-San. The servants of Graham's household, three dainty, chattering little *mousmees*, were old acquaintances, too, and came in for a good share of her sweet friendliness and gaiety. Ethel Montagu was no snob.

But she was English. After each visit the English owner had a certain, indefinable feeling that something in his house was lacking. The peaceful serenity of its atmosphere seemed just a trifle too peaceful, too serene.

He continued to take his moonlight and sunlight strolls, and tramped the terraces and the City of Ten Thousand Dead, and boated on the waters of the harbour, but O-Ke-San did not always accompany him. But her song still trilled through the paper-thick walls of the Japanese portion of the house which she condescended to inhabit in the absence of her lord, for Japanese walls are veritable ears, and the chattering *mousmees* had no knowledge of the maxim that still tongues make wise heads.

Japanese women are not required to pray so often as the menfolk, but O-Ke-San flouted all conventions, for her prayers were frequent to Kwannonsama, Goddess of Everything - that - means - Trouble—more frequent and regular than her meals, yet still less frequent and irregular than her honourable lord's kisses. He was a promiscuous kisser.

In the very midst of her perturbation—it was the first of the three days of Bon Matsuri, Feast of the Dead—the knowledge came suddenly to O-Ke-San of something which made her little heart beat faster, and which filled her little head with wild fancies of renewed hope. It was but momentary, for with equal suddenness a phantasmagoria of startling notions chasing across her brain, she sat down to think with a dazzling clearness of vision.

Then she bowed her head in deep humility and resolve. Perhaps in a future incarnation —and straightway her sweet treble resounded so joyously through the paper partitions that the knowing *mousmees* on their kitchen mats exchanged swift glances and giggled and chattered and nodded their pomaded little heads as if possessed of the secret of perpetual motion.

III.

The great Cemetery and the terraced hillsides swarmed with a gala crowd, feasting, merry-making, but apparently not worshipping. They were clad in gaily-coloured kimonos of hues violent enough to shame any self-respecting rainbow, yet seeming in perfect harmony—wide obi's with huge bows at back and flowing ends, the women's heads pomade-plastered stiff and high, and ornamented with wonderful pins and combs of coral and lacquer that delighted the eye.

To Bob Graham, Englishman, who was never given to probe deeply into anything, it was merely a pleasant and amusing experience. He left the path, which he trod alone in the gay crowd, striking away across the hillside towards his house. He had not seen much of his wife these three days of the Festival; he had been very busy. Now that he was free, his thoughts turned to her eagerly. To stroll again with her somewhere would be extremely pleasant, but he felt no annoyance when the *mousmees* informed him, with many low obeisances, that their honourable mistress was out; it was easy to guess

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where she would be found. The secluded recess through the wood was a haunt of many memories, and he was aware that she often frequented it alone. He smiled pleasantly at them, lit a cigarette, and sauntered off.

The wood was small, but dense of fir and cryptomeria, camphor-wood, and camelia, and carpeted with lovely tangles of fern and dwarf bamboo, which swished and crackled under his feet as he walked.

A gentle, musical murmur as of trickling water came from the edge of the thicket ahead, rising and falling, soft and sweet and weird across the stillness. He pushed aside the branches with his hands and looked out and down. Below him lay terraced walks, grassy slopes dotted with bungalows to the sea-edge, the sun-lit sea itself sprinkled with junks and sampans profusely decorated with flags and banners, big merchant vessels, and vessels of a more forbidding type.

But it was none of these which brought the whimsical smile to his boyish mouth and a light of tender regard to the brown eyes as he continued to gaze. From his feet the ground fell sharply to a recess on the terrace a few yards beneath. Before a votive shrine his wife knelt praying, her soft, child-like voice pleading earnestly in the Japanese tongue, which he had never troubled to learn. He caught his own name once or twice, at which he smiled; then his eyes clouded and a vague stirring within him rendered him strangely uneasy. He could see from where he stood the clear-cut profile of her delicate, refined-looking face, small and neat and dainty as a cameo, matching the sweet perfection and charm of the silver-grey kimono-clad figure. A sudden overwhelming sense of tenderness swept over him now, such as a Japanese wife rarely engenders in her spouse, and he slid down the steep bank and stood before her.

A flash of startled guiltiness showed in her clear eyes; then the delicate, mobile face became as a mask with the strange inscrutability of the East, and she bowed low before him in profound obeisance until her little head almost touched the ground.

She bowed low before him in profound obeisance until her little head almost touched the ground. "O Robert San," she said humbly, "I did not know. I thought you were—were——"

"O Robert San," she said humbly, "I did not know, I thought you were—were——"

"Oh, my little charmer," he mocked, as she left the sentence unfinished, "I am not, then. I am here, come to seek you to favour me with your divine presence at the tea-house of—oh, anybody. It doesn't matter whose, so long as you are with me. It will soon be tea-time, and after tea we will ramble—anywhere—except in the cemetery where your brothers and sisters are even now feasting. Feasting in a cemetery!—ugh! But now sit down or you'll get rheumatism or something in the knees, and give me a kiss."

He sat down beside her, leaning across that she might kiss him, which she did, dutifully, shyly, an expression on her sweet face almost of worship. He took a large red rose from his buttonhole.

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"Here," he said quickly. "Here's something you'll like. Let me pin it to your dress. That's it; now let's look at you."

He leant away from her the better to admire, then frowned. "Goes badly with pale cheeks. Red and white; a sort of blood on the moon effect, eh? Never mind, I'll kiss them both, then you'll be O.K." He did; first the rose, then her lips and cheeks.

"Red and white! Red and white!" she muttered, but so low that he did not hear. Then, suddenly, aloud: "Where did you get it?"

"Why," he answered readily, "it came from the garden of the illustrious Montagu San."

O-Ke-San shuddered.

"But now," he laughed gaily, "we'll have a quiet five minutes of our own. What shall we talk about?"

"Do you not ask me to whom, or why, I was praying?" she queried wonderingly.

"Not I, my little heathen," he replied cheerfully. "Pray as much as you like. If you need it—all right. If you don't—well, still all right. I married you for your own sweet self. I'm not worrying about your religion."

"For my own sweet self," she murmured wistfully. "Oh, my Robert San, and you told me that you loved me so, that my eyes were like stars my lips——"

"Please don't," he laughed. "Don't remind me of it, there's a dear——"

"Ah!" she interrupted sadly, "you are ashamed already."

"Ashamed?" he echoed. "Ashamed? Good heavens, child, what are you talking about?"

In some concern he put his arms round her, drawing her close.

"Now, kiddie," he chided gently, "what's the trouble? What's in that silly little head of yours, eh? You talk as though I didn't love you! What nonsense! Here—will *this* reassure you?"—he kissed her heartily—"and *this*, and *this*." Then the nearness of her and the soft warmth of her body made him suddenly rain kisses upon her—on her lips, her cheeks, her eyes, until she could scarcely draw breath, and he was forced to desist through failure of his own.

She lay in his arms quivering, an ecstatic smile upon her sweet little face.

"There!" he said, releasing her, "is that better? Tell me," he added quickly, "was that the cause of your prayers?"

He was looking down at her, half amused, half tenderly, and wholly his normal self, when he saw her rapt smile fade as she looked up at him, and at the look he went suddenly cold. A chill, uncanny sensation seemed to creep along his spine. The very roots of his hair tingled. It was as though some cold, clammy thing had enveloped him. Next instant it had gone, but it left him shaken and badly scared. He was puzzled, too; later he understood, sceptic as he was. Her voice recalled him.

"No," she was saying softly, "it was not that. I do not like to ask you, yet I must if my prayer is to be answered. It was to the Goddess Kwannonsama. To-night is the last night of Bon Matsuri, and at two o'clock, just before dawn, the little boats go sailing and with them the prayers for the souls which they contain, and—for those who may die before the next festival."

She paused, moistening her lips with the tip of her tongue.

"Go on," he prompted. "Where do I come in?"

"You, O Robert San," she resumed steadily, "are of a strange race, yet have I asked Kwannonsama to breathe into your heart this night that you, too, will launch your boat and waft away with your prayers that which it contains in safe keeping unto Nirvana."

With an effort he smothered a grin; he could never take her seriously for long. All the same, this was somewhat mysterious and uncomfortable. He grew impatient.

"What the dickens are you talking about?" he demanded. "Whose soul should *I* pray for?"

"Mine," she returned simply.

He started.

"Kid," he said grimly, "for two pins I'd take you by the shoulders and shake you. You frighten me. Why this morbid nonsense?"

"It is our custom."

"But surely everyone doesn't launch a boat in anticipation?"

"No," she answered quietly, with a meaning look.

He gripped her by the wrist, trembling with excitement in sudden understanding.

"You don't mean——" he began eagerly.

"I do," she replied simply; but at the sad note in her voice—and he knew that it should be anything but sad—his bright eyes clouded.

He drew a deep breath, exhaling it slowly and painfully, for a disturbing thought had come to him; then with eyes that saw nothing he stared out over the sunlit sea.

Whatever it was, his naturally buoyant spirits soon gained the ascendancy, and O-Ke-San, watching him covertly, saw his eyes grow bright and puckered and his lips

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quiver as he turned to her again with a smile.

"And you are worrying about that?" he cried, putting his arm round her. "All the same," he whispered tenderly, "I'll launch your boat to-night."

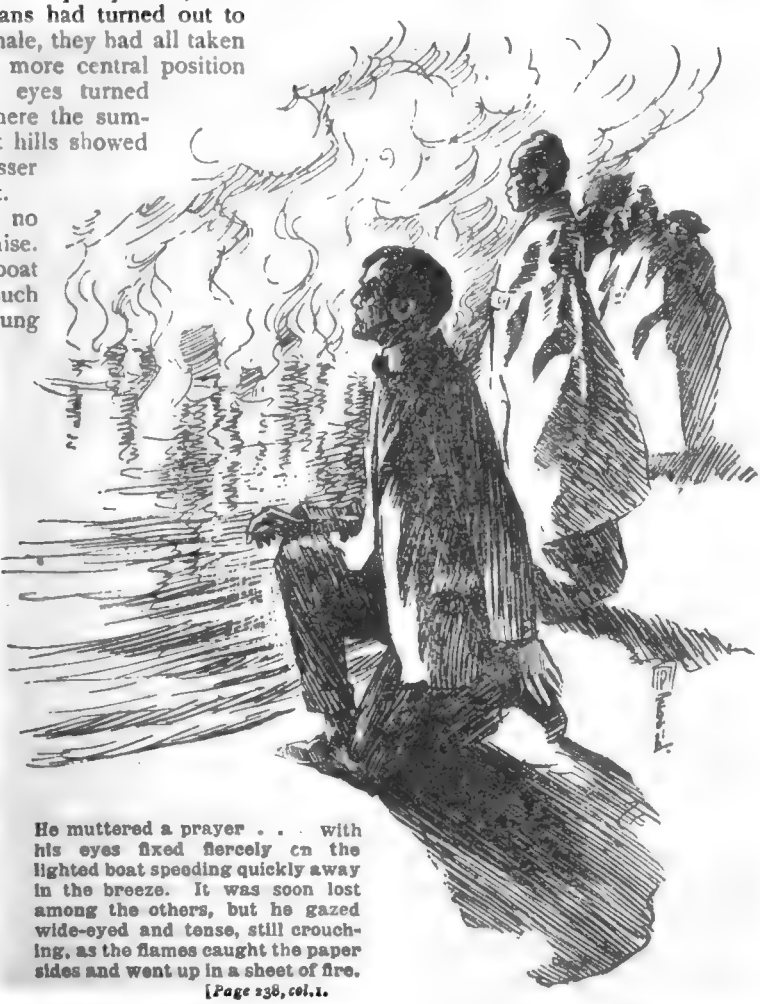
IV.

False pride may have held but a small place in the mind of Mr. Robert Graham, yet it was an indubitable fact that just now, standing on the shore of Nagasaki harbour with a toy boat made of straw under his arm, with little cotton sails, loaded with a few insignificant coins, a few grains of rice, and over all a big paper lantern, unlighted, he felt thoroughly ashamed, and, as he admitted to himself, an unmitigated ass. He was concealing the boat as well as he could under his jacket for fear of any chance acquaintance accosting him and the subsequent ridicule it would entail. But he need not have worried; it was pretty dark, and though many Europeans had turned out to witness the grand finale, they had all taken up their stands in a more central position than his own, with eyes turned expectantly inland where the summits of the lantern-lit hills showed black against the lesser blackness of the night.

There had been no avoiding his promise. O-Ke-San gave the boat into his hands with such a tender smile, and clung so trustingly to him that he kissed her with much warmth and fervour, answering her "Sayonara" more heartily even than usual. He wanted her to accompany him, but, as she pointed out, such was not the custom.

The waiting, the darkness, and the weird swish of the waves on the pebbly beach got on his nerves. His thoughts, which, when he was given to thinking at all, were usually so pleasant, now became decidedly unpleasant and dismal, even creepy. He wondered if his wife had any presentiment of ill that she sent him on such an errand. Ridiculous, of course, but—— He shivered. She was a Jap. He did not understand her or her race as well as he might. His partner had told him that they were an enigma even to him, and he had lived amongst them twenty years. His thoughts flashed back to Mr. Montagu's warning. Well, he was right so far. Things had run smoothly up to now. The novelty had not yet worn off. He did not think it would wear off. He was just as devoted to her, and she to him. And a child was coming—a half-caste. That was another point. Well, it hadn't come yet. Some day he would meet an English girl——. He breathed heavily. Montagu's own daughter——! Was she the meaning of his occasional periods of unrest?

He was roused by distant shouts. He looked up quickly. Over the brow of the hill from the Cemetery came a myriad moving points of light. Rockets and



He muttered a prayer . . . with his eyes fixed fiercely on the lighted boat speeding quickly away in the breeze. It was soon lost among the others, but he gazed wide-eyed and tense, still crouching, as the flames caught the paper sides and went up in a sheet of fire.

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streamers shot up from the ships in the bay, the people on board shouting and cheering. But their noise was quickly drowned in the ever-increasing roar of the oncoming multitude. Nearer and nearer it came until it engulfed him in a living mass of worshippers and a sea of coloured lights.

The spectacle thrilled him, and

A warm ray flashed towards him . . . full of promise, but he shivered and lowered his eyes to where the shaft of radiance shone full on to the still white form at his feet.

almost as under a spell he watched them crowd to the water's edge, crouching over their tiny vessels to launch them on their way.

Suddenly a sensation of chill swept over him. From head to foot his body seemed a thing of ice. Unconsciously his hand went to his jacket-pocket, extracting a box of matches. Then swiftly he launched his flimsy boat, and with fingers which trembled, lit the candle and pushed it off hastily. He muttered a prayer, hardly knowing what he was saying, with his eyes fixed fiercely on the lighted boat speeding quickly away in the breeze. It was soon lost amongst the others, but he gazed wide-eyed and tense, still crouching, as the flames caught the paper sides and went up in a sheet of fire, or hissing and spluttering disappeared as the water penetrated through. He stared on until the last light had vanished, the last prayer had been said, the last soul had been wafted to Nirvana.

The crowd dispersed gradually.

He started as a hand fell on his shoulder. It was Mr. Montagu. Graham passed his hand shakily over his forehead, looking at him stupidly.

"Bob!" Mr. Montagu's voice was tense. "Why did you do that?"

"You saw?"

"I have been watching you."

Graham laughed awkwardly, then drew a deep breath.

"Rather thrilling—what?"

"Why did you do it?" the other repeated sharply.

"Er—oh, just a whim of my wife's. But, there—I suppose I might as well tell you. The fact is, old man"—here his voice became jocular—"O-Ke-San, bless her, asked me to do it—custom, you know—in case anything happens to her within the next year. She's going to—to—oh, hang it all——" He stammered in some embarrassment. "We're going to have a—a piccaninny."

Almost before he had blurted out the words Mr. Montagu was gripping his arm tightly.

"Man!" he cried, shaking him in his agitation. "That is not their custom! Don't you understand?—and they never take

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liberties with customs. It's only for when they are dead—when they are dead!" he repeated with sudden harshness.

Graham stared at him for a moment clearly puzzled; then as the full significance of his partner's words penetrated into his brain his face grew ghastly.

"Dead?" he breathed. "Dead? You're joking—or mad!"

"Mad!" cried the other almost savagely. "You poor fool, it's you that's mad—or was, rather. Had you listened to me—bah! her life would have been wrecked, anyway. O-Ke-San was wise. She could see further than you; further even than I. Better to die at the pinnacle of happiness than live on to be eventually despised, and perhaps hated—it would probably come to that in time. Oh, yes, she was wise. But don't stand there trembling. Go and find her. And when you've found her—weep; it will do you good."

V.

A great camelia tree loomed black under his very nose. He looked around him, wondering and dazed, then he frowned. Trees and bushes and darkness were all about him, black, silent, and awesome. Who or what had led him here? No matter. He had started out to find her, and—ah! of course; he was in the wood—*their* wood; she was at the shrine, their retreat of happy memories. He smiled a little and walked on.

Robert Graham was not quite himself. He had grasped the situation well enough—too well; was surfeited, in fact, with understanding, and for a brain like his to be overloaded was to be utterly wearied, preventing it from fulfilling its proper functions. Branches cut and slashed at him unheeded, bushes tore and tripped him, trees rose up and met him; he plunged on. Through the trees ahead a star paling in the coming dawn, but still glittering and twinkling, held his soul-weary eyes.

The star vanished, and he found himself staring out over the sea. A grey, nebulous mist obscured the horizon, and into his poor numbed brain there trickled a vague, halting notion that the mist somehow was part of himself. His fingers stiffened and clenched, and he stretched them out with half-closed eyes as though he would grope a way through the darkness clouding his soul. He saw the pale streak of dawn appear in the haze, but no responsive glimmer came to lighten the desolation of his own spirit. The recess below him was still in deep shadow, but he did not look down. Something within his distorted faculties stayed him from that—or was it Something which was down there? Yet he knew, but he stared on, and a flash of golden light shot suddenly up into the sky; then the great golden rim of the sun itself, lifting slowly from the sea, dispersed the mist as if by magic touch, and flung its gleaming arms across the waters and the earth.

A warm ray flashed towards him, dazzling, hope-inspiring, full of promise, but he shivered and lowered his eyes to where the shaft of radiance shone full on to the still, white form at his feet, lying in a crimson pool.

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Remember Sir Douglas Haig himself wrote to urge all those at home who have been accustomed to buy books and magazines in the past to continue to do so freely, if possible in increasing numbers, and having read and enjoyed them to pass them on as freely for circulation among the troops.

"Tommy's" leisure is often of the spasmodic order, and that's why short stories and brief, breezy articles are the very thing for him. He will fight twice as well if he is in good spirits, so—well, it's up to you, isn't it?

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The "Banshee's" Overtime.

By Wilfrid L. Randell.

"And now the matchless deed's achieved,
Determined, dared, and done."

The Limited Mail had just pulled grandly out of Saltram terminal station on her long night journey to London, leaving the usual medley of people on No. 1 platform.

None of them took any notice of the "Banshee," a shabby-looking engine that had hauled the long, brilliant line of the Mail's empty coaches into the station like a good and faithful servant, had waited there for twenty minutes until the lords of the locomotive department had seen fit to send along a mighty express flier to tool them up to town, and now stood in the bay of No. 1 platform against the stop-buffers like a naughty child poked in a corner. Yet, before another hour had passed, she and her crew were to make a name for themselves that should endure for years.

When the war broke out, the Company, as represented by an acute locomotive superintendent, decided that the "Banshee" should resign public life for awhile in order to be rebuilt—in other words, to have a new boiler and a new wheel-base.

But at that fateful hour engines were in great request for the transport of troops, and any old bucket that would keep to the rails and carry a few pounds of steam without blowing up came in handy; so the life of the antiquated "Banshee" was prolonged, and there she was this evening, squirting hot water from every joint, hissing loudly at illegitimate spots, and dripping oil all over the place—a regular old-age pensioner of the line. In fact, Sandy Brown, her driver, declared that she only refrained from complete disintegration ("bustin' up," he called it) out of love for him and his mate. In this statement a grain of truth might be found; for it is extremely probable that had she been taken over by strange hands she would promptly have gone to pieces in the sheds, or distributed herself over the surrounding district in one terrible burst of despair.

Waking to the fact that the Mail had gone, and that a small red ground-switch had winked to a suggestive green, the "Banshee" sprinted backwards out of the terminus in a flurry of steam, giving the onlookers an impression that she was really an important part of the Mail and ought not to have been left behind. From the golden glow of the station she sped into a delicate daylight, already half moonlight; the moon was nearly at full, and hung like a shield of pearl in the eastern sky. The "Banshee" stopped with a skirl of her brakes just opposite a cabin labelled "Saltram Middle Signals," and her two men, as usual, exchanged evening greetings with the signalman. He pointed towards the town.

"Seen the fire?" he inquired.

Sandy and Tom Mills, his mate, gazed in the direction of Saltram, and noted a purple plume of smoke rising deliberately on the windless air. Every now and then a crimson tongue shot up into it and disappeared.

"Down by the canal somewhere," said Mills.

"Not far from the soldiers' hospital, by the look of it," added Sandy.

A figure came sauntering along the permanent way; it was Manners, the locomotive superintendent.

"Good evening, sir," said the three men. Manners was a good disciplinarian, and had an uncommonly keen eye for neglected duties, but they all liked him.

"Good evening," he answered. "Guess that's going to be a big blaze."

They agreed. Manners always "guessed"—he was known in the sheds as "The Guesser"—and undoubtedly he was right this time, for the smoke thickened and spread as they watched, until it hung in the twilight like a velvety pall.

"Guess I'm off to have a look at it," said the loco-boss, after contemplating the scene for a minute or two. "You going to the sheds, Brown?"

"Yes," replied Sandy.

["THE 'BANSHEE'S' OVERTIME" continued overleaf.]

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"Tell the chaps in the office I'll be back in half-an-hour, will you?"

"Right, sir," said Sandy. With a nod to the signalman, he gave the throttle a touch, and the "Banshee" slid away to the locomotive shed, her attendance on the Mail being her last job for the day.

It was not her last job for this day, however. In less than the time he had mentioned the chief returned with a grave face, and stood talking with his assistant clerk near the entrance. Sandy, preparing to leave, with his tea-can slung on his arm, overheard some of their conversation.

"It'll burn down the whole quarter unless they can get at it quickly," Manners was saying. "If the firemen could only get a hose along the canal-bank they might do some good. Guess it's a bad job."

"What about the hospital?"

"Some of the cases are taken out by now. Well, Brown?" Sandy had approached, and apologised for interrupting.

"Beg pardon, sir—there's a line alongside the canal. We shunt there sometimes when a coal-barge comes up."

"What then?" asked Manners curtly.

"I could run along on the engine and drag a hose with me. Plenty of steam on her still."

Manners looked steadily at Sandy.

"Do you know it would be at the risk of your life?"

Sandy smiled; and somehow, as the eyes of the two men met, the metallic Manners smiled also.

"Guess it's not a bad notion, Brown. I'm with you. Take her out to the Middle Box, and we'll get the switching fixed up."

He hopped up to the footplate of the "Banshee" with Sandy; and soon that wonderful little engine was intensely surprised to find herself being driven past the coaly and dirty parts of Saltram in the direction of the canal. At this time of the evening, when she generally reckoned on a few hours' well-earned repose among her companions in the sheds, to be taken on a shunting expedition—as she supposed—was nothing less than an insult to old age. She might be ancient and leaky, but she had some shreds of dignity left, and her friends, Sandy and Tom, ought to have known better. But something more glorious than a moonlight shunting trip was in store for the "Banshee" this time.

"Steady!" said Manners. "Getting near now. By Jove, guess this is some fire!" he exclaimed.

It was; in fact, it was destined to be the biggest conflagration in Saltram's history. In front of the advancing engine a pillar of flame sprang into the sky, roaring as though in triumph; beneath it, against a background like a shaken crimson curtain, the stark shapes of half-gutted warehouses showed grimly what a firm hold the fire had gained.

In the placid waters of the canal raged reflected sinister glories of colour; on the opposite tow-path tired horses, roused from their evening meal of hay, were dragging heavily-laden barges free from the area of danger, urged by whip and voice.

Sandy shut off steam and opened the whistle in a series of ear-splitting blasts as he saw the dense mass of people in front swarming across the rails. The crowd parted, and as they began to understand the purpose of this unexpected arrival, a tumult of cheering broke from hundreds of throats.

Gently the "Banshee" glided on towards the doomed buildings, and the firemen did not need to be told what to do. Even as she moved along, two of them, each carrying the nozzle of a hose, leapt on the engine, helped by the lean, sinewy arm of the locomotive chief.

"Anybody left in the hospital?" asked Manners.

"Afraid so," said one of the firemen. "One man, they say, up top. Most of them were taken out into the street at the front, but that's too hot now."

The "Banshee," under full steam, gave a sudden plunge forward into what seemed a veritable furnace, the lengths of hose wriggling and slithering along behind her. Unfortunately, a breeze had sprung up, and flames from many blackened lower windows coiled out and blistered the plucky little engine as she raced past; the bright, steely column of water spurting from the hoses crashed like a solid thing against walls and doors.

Crouching in the cab of the engine, the men set their teeth and went through momentary terrors of burning undismayed. Then, shutting off steam and putting the brakes hard down, Sandy pulled up sharply with a most unprofessional jerk. He had come to the stop-buffers of the siding and the dead wall that on this bank of the canal barred the way.

The two firemen jumped to the ground and bolted into a doorway from which smoke was pouring—the back entrance of the hospital. Far above their heads a face peered from an upper window, but they did not see it or hear its wild appeal—the noise below was too great. They seemed a long time gone; minutes were passing, and the glare of the flames was increasing.

"Guess I can help," said Manners, who was growing restive. "Wait here for me,

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boys." Pulling his cap down firmly and pressing a handkerchief to his mouth, he also went in at that dreadful door.

The building had never been intended for use as a hospital; it was originally an old-fashioned, straggling warehouse, with many quaint crannies and perhaps a dozen fairly large rooms or lofts, exceedingly useful for their present purpose. The firemen, encumbered by hose and equipment, toiled up flights of stairs and devoted their attention to preventing the flames from reaching the spot where they judged the one unrescued man might be.

Manners, free and agile and slim, leapt like a panther over obstacles and scrambled higher and higher until he reached the topmost floor. He tried every closed door he could see — some had warped and fallen away; he saw spacious wards with beds that had been dragged into confusion in the first awful moments of alarm, but he was many minutes before he found what he sought, and he had almost given up the search.

Then, as he was about to descend, he noticed a narrow passage from which wreaths of smoke rolled heavily towards him. He rushed along it, and at the end saw in a small room one poor, helpless fellow who had dragged himself to the window and appeared to be trying to haul himself painfully to the sill, to drop to the ground as a last chance. From beneath the planking came the murmur and crackle of imminent, mounting fire.

Manners shouted; the man turned towards the voice, then seemed to slip and fall. Manners was muscular—almost an athlete; the rank fumes of ascending smoke nearly choked him, but he lifted the unconscious form and stumbled back along that narrow passage. As he did so, he heard a smash, and a shower of sparks flew up in front of his eyes—the middle flight of stairs had fallen in! He hesitated, and at that moment a jet of water cannoned against the pile of burning wreckage and quenched it to a smouldering heap. The firemen had seen him.

Perceiving his dangerous position, one of them dropped his hose, jumped clear—a magnificent leap — to the next floor, and extended his arms; Manners lowered his burden carefully as far as he could, then let go. The fireman caught the helpless patient safely; his mate and Manners took the same leap, falling, but recovering, and all three made for the open—just in time, for the risk of delay grew serious.

Half-blinded by pungent drifting vapours, Sandy and Tom, peering anxiously from the waiting "Banshee," saw three figures stagger out to the track as if bewildered and not knowing which way to turn. Sandy pulled down the whistle-chain, and Tom shouted. The "Banshee's" yell drowned Tom's call and directed the three rescuers.

Helped by the strong arms of the engine's crew, they climbed to the footplate, and Manners, glancing at the vivid glare through which they had yet to venture, took off his coat and laid it over the face of the soldier. The two firemen mingled the jets from their hose-nozzles cleverly so that a spray of water fell upon the engine in a protective shower; then Sandy reversed and opened the regulator, hooked his finger in the chain of the whistle, shut his eyes, and waited.

As though she knew the gravity of the danger, the "Banshee" backed through that spouting cascade of flame, that scorching, asphyxiating reek of smoke and steam, shrieking her loudest warning all the way. At the point of intensest heat Manners stooped over the soldier to shield him with his own body from the blasts of flaring rubbish that shot out and fell in clouds of sparks on the granite setts of the canal's edge; Sandy and Tom flattened themselves in each corner of the footplate, hardly breathing.

It was only a matter of seconds—the brave "Banshee" was doing all she could; but ten or twelve seconds in a blazing furnace is an age. The metals had buckled, and once Manners thought the engine would jump the track and finish her career in the cool depths of the canal; personally, he felt at the moment as if it didn't matter. But she rocked along gallantly, and the crowd at the other end saw at last her low, black form emerge from the dazzling glare that had hidden her so long from their gaze. She charged straight at them, still screaming her "Clear the way!" and they made a long, open lane for her to pass through—a lane of shouting, cheering human beings. Never had the "Banshee" dreamt of such an ovation; never had she known such fame.

Manners passed the rescued man down to a dozen eager, friendly hands outstretched to help. No one would have recognised the usually smart and natty locomotive superintendent in the coatless figure with singed trousers, scorched hair and eyebrows, and bloodshot eyes; and even Sandy and Tom were frizzled with the ordeal they had gone through. But nobody minded their looks; when the two firemen had briefly told their story, the crowd passed it on till half Saltram town seemed to be shouting acclamations.

"Bravo, Sandy Bro-o-o-own!" yelled some.

["THE 'BANSHEE'S' OVERTIME" continued overleaf.]

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"Bravo, To-o-om!" called another group.

"Good old 'Banshe-ee-ee!'" came a third cry; and the "Banshee" began to think she would be well out of it all. So Sandy gave her steam, and she moved off on her journey back to the comfortable sheds.

"Guess we've done for to-night, boys," said Manners, as they ran slowly beneath the arch.

But it was not quite over, for the news had travelled with magical speed, and an astonishing stentorian cheer from a cluster of enginemen and cleaners greeted the heroes. Before they could break away for treatment of dirt and bruises and slight burns, they had to run the gauntlet of handshakes and congratulations. And then Manners said good night in a tone which meant business.

"You needn't turn up to-morrow," he said to Sandy and Tom, as he shook hands rather carefully. "We'll manage without you. Have a rest."

"What about you, sir?" asked Sandy.

"Guess I'm all right." He strolled off briskly, in spite of a distinct limp, with Tom's blue working-coat over his singed clothing.

"I guess he *is* 'all right,' no mistake," said Tom. "Didn't think he had it in him."

The two men departed to their homes, leaving the "Banshee" in the hands of the shed staff; and that plucky little engine, her sides all scaly with hanging flakes of burnt paint, her steam blowing off, her footplate littered with charred fragments of wood, having achieved something like immortality in the archives of Saltram town, settled down with many grunts and wheezes for a good clean up and a peaceful night's repose.

EGYPT.

(*With apologies to the Author of "Mandalay."*)

Somewheres west across the ocean, in a place that once I knew,
Where there ain't no flyin' bullets splashin' dust against the blue,
There's a cottage nestlin' cosy in the shadow of a hill;
Just a year ago I left it, and I hear it callin' still.
Callin' with a little sigh,
Like the day I said good-bye—
Oh, the breath of sweetbriar hauntin', and the scent of cherry-pie!
Honeysuckle climbin' high—
Purple violets peepin' shy,
Can't you hear it callin', callin', like the day I said good-bye?

When I shut my eyes and listen I can hear it, clear and plain,
Then a camel snorts, and brings me, grousin', back to earth again.
'Tain't no scent of apple-blossom makes you turn your 'ead aside,
And, for green of English meadows, there's the desert stretchin' wide.
Miles and miles of burnin' sand
Bricky-red on either hand,
Insecks buzzin' busy round you, and a-crawlin' in the sand,
All your mid-day rations canned
(Insecks dotes on bully, canned),
Scorchin' day-time, freezin' night-time, in a blighted 'eathen land!

Ship me back across the ocean to a place I used to know,
Where there ain't no sneerin' Sphinxes, and the lanes are all a-blow,
Where the buttercups are golden, and the daisies call to me,
And the birds are whistlin' cheery, and the grasses wavin' free.
Where the apple-blossoms blow
Like they did a year ago,
Sunlight slantin' through the branches, and the breezes sighin' low;
Petals driftin' to and fro
Just like flakes of fallin' snow—
Oh, the thousand things a-callin' in a place I used to know!

Anne Page.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Words of Good Cheer.

"THEY ALL LOVE JACK!"

I MAKE this statement with authority, being in the position of the little girl, who, asked how she knew the sour apple had disagreed with her, replied that she had inside information. I, too, have inside information in the shape of glowing letters from readers who appreciate the naval stories and sketches which have appeared in the ROYAL during the last few months, many of them from the magic pen of "Taffrail." This being so, I have persuaded that popular author to follow up his series with further stories, which will appear from time to time in the ROYAL.

You may look forward also to another article by Horatio Bottomley, which will appear in the August ROYAL under the title of "Should Men be Made to Marry?" Mr. Bottomley has tackled the subject with all his accustomed power and vividness. It is an article you *must* read!

"THE GOOD OLD ROYAL!"

I use the phrase in all humility—it is not my own!—but the endearing description of an admiring Corporal "somewhere in France." I am not given to vain glory, but I think I may say without boasting that the ROYAL has its full share of adherents both in the Army and Navy. "I can't tell you how the boys love to see the magazine," says one correspondent in Malta, and after that I need hardly remind you to pass on your ROYALS to a soldier or sailor, or to hand them over the counter of a post office for distribution among the troops.

If you doubt the attraction that magazines have for our fighting men you have only to glance at the picture of the contented trio below, engrossed as they are in the ROYAL and its sister magazines, the NOVEL and PEARSON'S.

And do *please* order your ROYALS in advance; then we shall know exactly how many copies to print, and no paper will be wasted.

THE FRESH AIR FUND.

As most of you know, Miss Gladys Cooper, the beautiful young actress, is appealing this year on behalf of the F.A.F., all particulars of which you will find on page 207. I should like to acknowledge with sincere thanks from Miss Cooper and myself the following contributions:

W. A. B., £5; J. C. Rumball, 12s. 6d.; N. I. M., 1s.; Miss Edwards, 1s.; J. C. Carroll, 10s. 9d.; Miss Chapman, 1s.; Sport on Active, 2s.; Miss M. McIver £1; P. Weaver, 2s.; W. S. Versfield, 12s. 6d.; J. Wood, £2; Mrs. Leslie Shaw, 10s.; R. Rose Innes, 4s.; Lover of Kiddies, Cape Town, £1; H. H. Seed, 2s. 6d.; Seven Australian Soldiers, £1 4s. 6d.; P. K. Wallace, 1s.; Corporal F. H. Holmes, 10s.; per Miss Gladys Cooper, £1 15s.; A. Mailland, 1s.; J. Garland, 2s.; Miss M. Rowe, 3s.; G. Albert Edwards, 10s.; Mrs. Iredale, 2s.; R.N.A.S., Lower Deck Ratings, £1 1s.; C. E. Scott, 5s.; Lionel, Gordon, and Allan J., 3s.; J. Saunders, £1; Mrs. S. E. Morris, 5s.; W. H. C., 3s. 6d.; H. T. King, 10s.; E. N. Lamb, 5s.; Mrs. and Miss Hunt, 10s.; Boy, 1s.; Nelson Sympathisers, £3; per Miss Gladys Cooper, 10s.; Lieut.-Col. A. and Mrs. Ward, £1; Writers' and Corporals' Mess, H.M.S. *Edinburgh Castle*, £1 5s.; Observer, £1; D. Bennett, 6s. 6d.; A Lover of Children, 1s.; Egypt, 5s.; S. P. O. L., 16s.; J. V. Hardy, £1; R. A. Walters, £1; Well-wisher, £5; C. Green, £1; Anon., 5s.; B. G. Baxter, £1 1s.; Mrs. Cadwalade, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Cuthbert, £1; Mr. and Mrs. A. Gray, £1.

Grand (*R.M.*) total .. .. £40 3s. 3d.

ALL ABOUT BABIES.

You will have seen from Mr. Bottomley's article on page 190 all about "National Baby Week" and the campaign which is to be waged for the purpose of securing to every baby in Britain a "birthright of mental and bodily health." But whatever the State may do, a great deal rests with the individual, and this is where "Nurse Margaret's Book on Babies," published under the auspices of the National Baby Week Council, will prove of inestimable benefit.

Mothers who long to give their babies the best chance possible will find this little book the greatest comfort and help. It is full of practical advice on baby's upbringing, contains all particulars of the most up-to-date treatment of infants, and explains how they may be brought up to be bonny and healthy without any of the coddling and fussing to which inexperienced mothers are so prone.

The book can be obtained with paper cover at the price of one shilling from any bookstall, or post free for 1s. 3d. from the office of THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. Bound in cloth it is sold at 1s. 6d. (post free 1s. 9d.).

Photo *H. Muir.*

Don't forget to pass on your ROYAL to one of our fighting men. This snapshot, taken at a Military Hospital in Perthshire, shows how much they appreciate magazines.

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